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MEXICO

ITS EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS—SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR SOLUTION

BY

MANUEL BARRANCO

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

The ever clear and blue tropical skies of my beloved country have never been so dark. The future of Mexico, rising from her gloomy present, never was so full of terrible possibilities. A feeling of relief and gladness came to me when I knew that I could write my thesis with Mexico as the subject. At last, I could do something—little as it might be—and not stand by in exasperating inactivity, while my own people were passing through such sad experiences.

Even now, as I begin to write this paper, the newsboys are voicing outside the latest news. Their cry, only too familiar to me, "The War in Mexico," makes my heart ache. I cannot get accustomed to it. For three years it has been ringing in my ears. For three long years it has been casting a shadow of sadness upon my life as an expatriate. But then, no one ever gets accustomed to that which tortures him!

There has also been another source of painful experience to me. While the bloody drama is slowly developing upon the field of Mexico, a deluge of articles, books, and editorials about Mexico has overflowed this country. In a large part of this "literature" on Mexico, its problems and conditions, what amazing ignorance is shown. How many wrong statements and mendacious conclusions are made owing to lack of knowledge of the real factors of the Mexican problem. I am referring here to that press, to those pens, whose writings about Mexico are motivated by higher ideals of human brotherhood and by a lofty sense of justice.

As to the "jingo" press and writers, those that have nothing but words of contempt and burning irony for our sorrows, and those who, pursuing selfish and mercenary purposes, want to capitalize in dollars our sufferings, and so are engaged in the ungrateful task of misleading public opinion, what can I say to them? Nothing is the matter with their knowledge or their thinking; the wrong is in their hearts and only God can correct it. They have not succeeded in making a terrible international

tragedy of the unhappy political conditions of Mexico; and they will not succeed. There is against them that typical characteristic of the American people as a whole: *A clear sense of justice and fair play.*

For the former people, for those that are sincere students of Mexico, this work is written; to them it is humbly dedicated, not with the pretentious idea of changing their views entirely, but with the well meaning end of presenting to them what are, in my opinion, the real factors in our problem; thus enabling them to co-operate with us in solving or planning to solve a problem that for us Mexicans is a question of life or death. I must ask patience and indulgence for making suggestions which are meant, too, to urge others better equipped with ideas, experience, and intellect to pursue an inquiry that would be so helpful to my country.

Love excuses many things! However, I am not going to discuss anything on sentimental grounds, but on the basis of facts and science, having as guide authorities on the subject and illuminating opinions from educators of Mexico, Latin America in general, and other countries.

It was my good fortune to come to the United States after finishing my college and normal school education and having had experience in teaching. So, after six years of study here, two in a normal school and four in this university, I feel that I should be able to judge coolly, to compare without prejudices, and detect impartially our shortcomings and good qualities. I feel, also, that, having become familiar with American life and customs and ways of doing things, having lived the life of the American students and drunk at the same fountains their ideals of progress and democracy, without losing, however, one atom of fondness and regard for my country, I should be able to speak and see the things of Mexico with the eyes of an American, if I care to, but with the heart of a Mexican.

I have planned my work in such a way that, in presenting each of the factors, ethnical, political, social, etc., that to my mind constitutes in itself a problem in the complex Mexican question, I will establish also the premises upon which the logical conclusion will be the same generalization that is in the mind of every sober student of Mexico: And this is, That education and only education *is the first, last, and ever the only remedy and perhaps the only hope of the Mexican Republic.*

Mexico needs, cries for, reform, for a social reorganization based on a better economic and social basis; and education is the strongest lever for a reform of this kind, since the school sees and plans for the future.

There have been many patriotic Mexicans who have fought bravely, who are fighting gamely to give Mexico an educational system based on her needs and according to modern educational ideals. But, although splendid laws have been enacted, in the practice little has been accomplished. It is impossible to build schools where "the lance is always glittering and the gun-shot always echoing." It is difficult to sow upon a soil that trembles!

But our opportunity will come. I believe that better times will come, and then, when the smoke and turmoil of our petty quarrels have cleared away, then and there another silent, mighty, and noble battle is going to be fought—a long and persistent battle—with its heroic, though unheralded, deeds; with its patriotic, though unrecorded, sacrifices. The same battle that Germany fought after having seen herself humiliated in Jena. The same battle that France fought after the German schoolmasters humiliated her in Sedan.

We need in our schools that old maxim of the Prussian schools: "Through self-activities to self-dependence." How fruitful it would be if we could impress in the mental make-up of our directing classes that characteristic "go-aheadness" of the northern people and succeed in directing their activities toward the educational field.

The Mexicans of culture and ideals can do much in this line for our country. There is no time for recriminations and putting blame—a task always easy for the weak—let us construct, let us work. "We Latin peoples," says a French writer, "cry to everything to help us and never think of helping ourselves."

One of the most important elements of our nation, its backbone in certain respects, we may say, is made by the *millions*, yes, the many *millions* of "certain wild animals"—quoting La Bruyere's famous picture of the French peasants on the eve of the French revolution—"male and female, scattered over the fields, black, livid, all burned by the sun, bound to the earth that they dig and work with unconquerable pertinacity, they have a sort of articulate voice and, when they rise on their feet, they show human faces and in fact are men!"

Sadly, this is a true picture of our Indians in Mexico. For four centuries that has been their unhappy destiny in their once powerful and glorious Anahuac. Their world has been their toiled soil and has had for its limits the rising and setting of the sun!

It is time for us to go to them, to raise them up by means of education, extending to them our hand, not as protectors, nor as tutors, not only as friends, but as brothers and fellow citizens. When the school has given a little corner of sunshine in this festival of light of our civilization—God knows that they *never* have had a chance—then we will have done our duty and Mexico will be a great united nation.

As to the Americans: I pray that this and other works of the same kind will induce them to study us better and to know really what our situation and problems are. One of my first ideas when I took up this work was to read what American travelers who have gone to Mexico or Latin America say about us, how they see us. Of course, I know what the "average" American *knows* about us. Here again, I was disappointed to find the astonishing lack of knowledge that the great majority display in their observations and statements. Some of them have measured our acts and manners according to strict American standards of thinking and doing, ignoring the fact that they are dealing with the characteristics of another race. Others have regarded our political trials and failures as proofs of our unfitness for democracy without stopping to think that our nation is hardly a century old and in her democratic essays of government and freedom, forgetting the centuries during which the Teutonic people have been learning the principles of self-government. Commenting on the American ignorance about us, an American writer says: "We have only just discovered Spanish-America." I believe this is the main cause of the misunderstanding that often arises between peoples, between Mexico and the United States. Knowledge of the persons, as well as the culture, always softens personal relations and gives that social sense of friendly relationship that makes one see and judge people with sympathetic attitude.

The man that we do not like is the man that we do not know. I do wish Mexicans could know Americans as I know them, and that Americans could know my countrymen as I know their countrymen. If we treat and come into contact with certain

people about whom we know little, we are surprised to discover unsuspected noble qualities, admirable traits that make us like them. "Whenever we are tempted to conclude that somebody is hopelessly insignificant," says an eminent writer, "then, what we need to correct is our judgment by better knowledge of them." Certainly, Americans should study and should understand Mexicans better; then they will know what Mexico is, what glorious hopes belong to her beyond the temporary dangers and embroilments of the times.

I have faith that beyond the unhappy civil war that now stains with blood the fields of my country lies a magnificent future of peace and prosperity. The more terrible the storm, the more beautiful its rainbow!

M. B.

Columbia University,
April, 1914.

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MEXICO: ITS EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS—SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR SOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE RACES

Race Characteristics and Struggles

A race has inherited characteristics of its own. Its individuals differ, more or less, physiologically and psychologically, from individuals of another race. Furthermore, a race as a social group has customs, traditions, laws, institutions, and ideals which constitute its culture or civilization. Such spiritual or intellectual inheritance commonly varies in some essential points from the ideals and traditions of another social group. Differences due to environmental influences are found even in races of the same ethnic origin but living in different localities.

When two races meet while moving more or less upon the same plane of culture, which naturally varies, since such culture springs up from different social and racial inheritances, then a clash, a friendly or more often unfriendly conflict takes place, and from this rival struggle, in its ultimate outcome, progress arises. The history of human civilization is written in the history of the struggle between oriental and occidental peoples, in the rivalry of the Western and Eastern cultures: "All activity is a clash of atoms or thoughts." In the physical world, all activity of atoms produces energy, in form of heat, light, or motion. In the intellectual world, all activity of ideas produces that mighty dynamic energy called progress.

In terms of evolution, a struggle between peoples, as that mentioned above, is called *secondary* struggle or struggle of *contention*. But there is another form of conflict, more primitive, more rash, more brutal, which has also been vital in the progress or evolution of humanity. It has been the arm that has been

used mercilessly, by the law of the survival of the fittest. This is called *primary* struggle or struggle of *conquest.* For example, take two peoples who come together, one being strong and the other weak, one civilized and the other barbarous or savage. The result of such a conflict is well known. The weak is wiped out and the social and racial cohension of its group is destroyed. The stronger, the wiser, has survived. Humanity has obtained a biological advantage in its evolution.

Such was the kind of conflict that took place when in 1519 a handful of daring adventurers, clothed with a medieval civilization and thirsting for glory and for gold, fell as an avalanche upon the Aztec Empire. Was the outcome of this terrific impact, that pulverized a mighty nation, a gain to civilization? Before attempting an answer, let us sketch, in a few lines, the scene of this epic tragedy and its actors.

It must have been astonishing to those sturdy warriors, who had still the dust of the bare Castillian plains on their boots, to contemplate the wonderful panorama unfolded before them. Imagine yourself seeing a huge plateau, embraced, as it were, by a pair of gigantic arms, two chains of mountains, on its eastern and western margins. Imagine the lofty plains of this plateau, from five to nine thousand feet above the sea level, crowned with majestic mountains and old volcanoes whose "peaks, entering the limits of perpetual snow, diffuse a graceful coolness over the elevated plateaus below," all clothed with magnificent vegetation only seem in equinoctial lands. The gentle and sometimes abrupt slopes of that immense table-land were a symphony in green, graded into a gamut of climes, offering the vegetation and fruits of cold, temperate, and hot zones, within a day's journey. No wonder that before such a spectacle, a feast of color and light to the eyes, the rude iron soldiers of Cortés stood astounded. They climbed the plateau and, pressing on, at last reached the valley of Mexico. The jewel of Anahuac was before them! Again the Spaniards were taken aback by the splendid panorama. Set in a perfect ring of mountains—among them the volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Yxtlazzihuatl, always covered with a mantle of snow—resting upon "soil carpeted with beautiful verdure," and surrounded by blue and placid lakes, stood Mexico City, the old Tenochtitlan, the pride of the Aztec civilization, the "Venice of the Western World."

[1]"Its long lines of glittering edifices and its floating gardens, struck by the rays of the evening sun, trembled on the dark blue waters of the lakes." "It looked like a thing of fairy creation," writes Vernal Diaz, the soldier historian, who was with Cortés, as they stood motionless, contemplating the landscape from the hills above—like a flock of birds of prey, before descending upon their victim."

"This conquest," says Prescott, "taken with all its strange and picturesque accompaniments, has an air of romance rather than of sober history." What kind of hearts were beating within the walls of the great city? In what kind of civilization were those thousands of souls living?

There is not room in this work for a description of the Aztec civilization. Let the interested reader turn to the works of historians like Prescott,[2] Letourneau,[3] and many others, and he will find that the Aztec Empire was a very well established government, with its nobility, judicial system, laws and revenues, military, religious, and educational institutions, picture writings, phonetic signs, and a calendar better calculated than the European of that time. In mechanical arts, the skill of the Aztec jewelers yet surprises those who visit the National Museum of Mexico City. There, one may also find beautiful specimens of pottery, sculpture, and feather articles.

In their social intercourse the Aztecs were kind and polite. They had regular social entertainments where they enjoyed dancing and agreeable drinks. They had baptismal rites and funeral ceremonies. Their trades and agriculture were fairly well developed. A black shadow in their culture was their religious festival in which thousands of human hearts, warm yet from their victims, were offered to the god of war, Huitzzilopochtle, in the great Teocalli. But all, good and bad things, fell like a castle of cards under the feet of the conquerors, and from the ashes of the Empire of Montezuma an anemic "New Spain" arose.

Who were the daring warriors that made this epopee possible? They were the descendants of a noble and proud race, a race which has made a high record in the achievements for

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[1] Quoted from Prescott, Conquest of Mexico, Vol. I, p. 450.
[2] Book I, View of the Aztec Civilization, *op. cit.*
[3] Letourneau, L'Education dans l'ancient Mexique.

the progress of humanity; but they were not the cream of such a race, far from it! Perhaps among them were some broken *hidalgos* but the majority, undoubtedly, could not face calmly the police of their country. They were a band of middle-age *Condottiers*, remarkable for their heroism, but who "often were mingling the enthusiasm of the Crusader and the valor of the Knight-errant with the bigotry of inquisitors and the rapacity of pirates."[4]

Alexander invaded Persia not alone to settle old debts with the ancient enemy of Greece, for his youthful spirit was animated also with the idea of expanding the Hellenic culture in Asia. The patrician Romans wanted to see the Roman eagles dominating every corner of the earth. France conquered to carry civilization and freedom everywhere. England embarked herself in conquests as a means of enlarging her commerce and trades by colonization. The Puritans and Pilgrims came to America, looking for religious liberty; but the aim of the conquerors of Mexico was to plunder. The banner of this band of heroic robbers was gold, gold, and ever gold. The poor Indians were astonished to see these "Sons of the Sun" go almost to insanity in their desire for the yellow metal, to them unimportant.

At the beginning the Conquerors did quick work, never stoping before anything in their eagerness to seize all that could be found in gold and precious stones. They destroyed, burned, and murdered just as a band of pirates do when a ship is boarded. Later they were more systematic in their unhappy task, though no less cruel and destructive. This is the answer to the surprised foreigner who does not find in the beautiful Latin-American cities, from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, even a stone dedicated to honor the memory of the Spanish Conquerors. Why should we honor them?

The Mingling of Races

With the beginning of the Colonial period in New Spain, the process of fusion and assimilation of races began, and the present types of Mexicans came into being. It has been said by many superficial students of Mexico that a vigorous Mexican race cannot be expected when its ascendants have been from a group

[4] Parkman, The Struggle of a Continent, p. 5.

of men of low moral standard on one side and degenerate Indians on the other.

In the first place, although the Conquerors left an ethnic trace of their stay in New Spain, it was too insignificant to be the basis for the new race. It is generally admitted that they never intended to settle in Mexico. Their rash methods to get rich quickly were in part motivated by their desire to return home as soon as possible. So, very shortly after the Conquest was consummated, the majority of them were on their way back to Spain, with their purses as full as their consciences, if they had any. Then the real basis of our race began to come. A current of Spanish emigration was established which has not ceased to flow. To say that these emigrants were or are of the type of Cortés's soldiers is to slander the thousands of Spaniards who came and are coming to our shores. These are hardy workers all of them, with honest and clean hearts, which have been always animated by that Spanish quality of *hidalguia*, that embodies a noble sense of charity, hospitality, and chivalry, with an ideal of loyalty and patriotism that is almost a fanaticism in them. Regarding the other side, the Indians, I shall discuss it when treating Indians later on. Such was the race that began to contribute to form our ethnic stock when, in the ruins of the Aztec Empire, and among the fallen *teocallis* and broken idols, the rude Castillian warriors found a charming "spoil," the Indian maid.

It has been said that this fusion was simply due to a male impulse, flamed by a primitive instinct. The Spaniards came without women. Although in some instances this might have been the case, I do believe that there was another higher chord which moved the Spaniard unhesitatingly to the arms of his brown companion. The winning beauty of the Indian princess, who moves graciously into a society in which many touches of civilization were noted, the noble distinction and appearance in her manners and dress, undoubtedly captivated the sensitive, dreamy, and romantic side of the Spaniards' nature. Cortés himself set an example when he selected Marina, or, in her Indian name, "Malinche," as companion, thus giving the theme, with his idyl, to the most romantic chapter of the Conquest. The readiness with which the Conquerors went to their pretty captives and the fact that they have kept going to them for

centuries, even when there were Spanish women in the Colony, show that there was something higher than a primitive instinct behind their impulse. Perhaps in this phenomenon a proof can be found that the differences between the whites and the Indians are not so profound. It may be that this is a silent evidence that there are many similarities between the two races that make their biological and social relations closer.[5]

Classification of Races as Result of the Fusion of Spanish and Indian Bloods

The intermingling of white and Indian blood, as well as the definite establishment of the Spanish power, gave birth to various race classes. Some writers in classifying the races in Mexico usually go into such detail with long lists of names that it is a puzzle even for a Mexican to understand it. Frequently they take great pains to describe types and classes that, at least in the Mexico of to-day, do not exist in such numbers as to form a class, or a real ethnic division. Again, such classes have had importance long ago due to special social conditions, but have died long since with the banishing of the said conditions and now their value is only historical.

Here is the classification more often made:

1. European race. Spaniards and other foreigners.
2. Criollo—creole. Of Spanish descent, but born and bred in Mexico.
3. Mestizo—mixed. Spanish and Indian descent.
4. Castizo. Spanish and mixed descent.
5. Indians. Race autochthonic.
6. Mulato—mulatto. Spanish and Negro descent.
7. Zambo. Indian and Negro descent.

Indeed, there is exactness in this list. All "shades" of color are carefully classified and it is technically correct. But with regard to Mexico the list is too long. For instance, the mulattoes, or descendants of Spaniards and negroes, are practically unknown in Mexico. Rare examples are found in our Southern States upon the Pacific Coast. In the other Central, Northern, and Gulf States, mulattoes and negroes are only seen on the

[5] Juarez, our pure Indian blood president, had six children; one married a Frenchman, three married Spaniards, one Cuban, one Mexican.

Pullman trains, usually speaking English and not of Mexican nationality. The Zambos, too, are very few, so few that I do not remember ever having seen one Zambo in Mexico in all my life. Perhaps in Cuba or Brazil these classes are important, but not in Mexico. Now, coming to the "criollo"—creole—class, descent of Spanish parents but born and bred in the country, these people are not a *class* any longer. The criollo class does not exist to-day in Mexico.

In the first place, I may say that *criollo* means in Spanish just the same as creole in English: "born and bred a native, but not of indigenous stock." So, a son of English, French, or Chinese parents will be called incidentally a *criollo* of Mexico. Race horses born in the country of foreign parents are known as *criollo* stock. Speaking of New York City, we can say that it is populated by Irish, Hebrew, Italian, and German creoles. The *criollos* as a class have disappeared from Mexico, and have only historical importance. In the colonial days, there was the *criollo* class. It was formed by all the Mexicans of pure Spanish blood. Regardless of whether their parents and grandparents were born in Mexico, they belonged to the *criollo* class and were *criollos* as long as they were of Spanish stock only.

The *criollos*, thus constituted, played an important part in our political and social life, and they have their share in the building of our *nationality*. I shall speak again of them in the chapter on Political Institutions. It is enough to say now that Hidalgo, the father of our country, was a *criollo*. Iturbide, who ultimately consummated our independence from Spain, was another *criollo*. But such "class" has faded away from our political horizon. Perhaps it would not be difficult to detect remains or vestiges of it, personified in some "hidalgos an sang bleu" that are parading yet their Colonial titles and nobility in the capitals of Europe. It would not be a difficult task to trace back to the old *criollo* class the descendants of some of the members of our aristocracy, whose importance now, in relation to the progress of Mexico, is to serve as a dull background for a more vigorous and industrial class upon which the hopes of our democracy rest. The Mexican nation does not owe one particle of her progress and efforts towards civilization to her aristocracy. Indeed, it has *blocked* her progress by isolating itself and its money, with its egotism, prejudices, and conservatism, when the country

had needed the help of all her sons. Economic and industrial developments have been checked by these people with selfish persistence which can never be forgiven. They have been the first to run to cover in times of distress and storm and the first to come out to enjoy the sunshine when all is over.

But I am getting away from my present topic. What I want to emphasize is that we have not a "mulatto" or "zambo" class, that, although there are many pure white blood Mexicans, they do not form a racial class.

The most practical and real division that could be established is that of three ethnic groups: 1. *White* or *European race*, 2. *Mixed race—Mestizo*, and 3. *Indian race.* In the official census of the Mexican Republic this is the classification adopted. Humboldt made such distinction also. Other writers who have been "on the ground" have made it. Matias Romero, in his book, "Mexico and the United States," made the same race distinction. Prince Roland Bonaparte divided our races into[6] "Les blancs, les metis, et les Indians."

Statistics

To appreciate the importance of the problem of races in Mexico, a superficial view of her census should be enough. However, a census is not very reliable in a vast country with a great percentage of uncivilized population, undeveloped roads, lacking quick communication of any sort, and often disturbed by political agitations. Such has been the case in Mexico, where the Indians, too, systematically avoid being taken in the census, fearing that the Government wants to know where they are in order to tax or to take them into the army. In 1900, during the last years of the Diaz Administration, the government worked eagerly on the census. An office with experts was created. President Diaz himself, to set the example, went from house to house on his "block," taking the census of his neighbors. The bishop sent pastoral letters to the priests, urging them to cooperate. The result of the census was that the Republic had 13,611,712 inhabitants. Ten years later, when Mexico was preparing herself to celebrate the centenary of her independence, another census was taken, which, although not finished entirely

[6] Mexique au debut du XX Sicle, p. 95.

because the revolution broke out, nevertheless, gave 15,063,207 as the number of inhabitants. Therefore, it is a safe guess to say that the Mexican Republic has 16,000,000 of population.

Regarding the distribution of races, there are many very interesting observations to be made from the data given by the census:

	Per Cent. of Population			
Group	1810	1895	1900	1910
White or Europeans	18	22	19	20
Mestizos	22	47	43	45
Indians	60	31	38	35

I think the 1895 census is far from correct. Regardless of the inaccuracies of the census, three things are clear from a glance at this table: First, the white population is increasing very slowly. A means of its increase, emigration, has been small, very small; political unrest and lack of intelligent advertisement are the cause of it. Second, since Humboldt made his careful estimation a century ago, the mixed population has exactly doubled its number.[7] Third, the Indian population is decreasing rapidly. Let us treat each group separately.

Whites

Among the pure white population the foreigners are counted. Politically, their influence is none, since the Constitution bars them from that field. Socially, sorry to say, their influence is not as important as it should be. Their social activities are very limited and mostly among themselves. Only in their civic celebrations do they get together and organize festivities to which the Mexicans are invited. They come in contact with the people only as a whole. In the large cities the foreign colonies have schools of their own. In Mexico City there are very good American, French, and German schools. Mexican children are welcomed to them. The separation of the foreigners is unfortunate, because the closer the social relations, the easier the interchange of ideas, and the broader the sympathies. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, it is remarkable to observe the power of absorption that Mexico has, due, perhaps, to her climate or general environment. It is a fact

[7] Humboldt's estimation in his Political Essay of New Spain.

that there is a strong attachment to the country in the people that have lived there. The children of these very foreigners, living with their parents, speaking their own language, and going to their own school, come to be as real Mexicans, in heart, as the Mexicans themselves. During the French intervention, the French were surprised to find many French "criollos," French in every way, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Mexicans against France.

Economically, the whites and mainly the foreigners are a great factor of progress. The Indians and the Mestizos of the poor class can not do certain work that requires the training and education which they lack. The middle and rich classes do not care to go into the trades and industries, so the foreigners have control of the majority of our industries and trades. Mexico, like all young, rich, and undeveloped countries, needs emigration. With peace, a stable government, and as strong a current of European emigration as that of Argentina, my country will be the wonder of the twentieth century.

"*Mestizos*"

The preponderance of the *Mestizos* or Mexicans of mixed Spanish and Indian blood is striking. Their growth, as shown in the census, proves their importance as an ethnic factor in the Mexican nationality. In the lapse of a century, 1810 to 1910, their percentage of the population, as calculated by Humboldt, has jumped from 22 to 45 per cent. So, for good or for bad, their existence as a race is an accomplished fact.[8] This rapid increase of the *Mestizos* can be better understood when it is known that in Mexico there is no sharp color line regulating the mixture of european and Indian bloods. In the fusion of two races there is a law of inheritance, that the strong race must predominate. So, in individuals of mixed blood, usually the white characteristics predominate and the individuals are considered whites. In the United States, where the color line is so sharp, a white man with a little negro blood is considered negro and treated as such. Perhaps this attitude is justifiable, as there is much difference between Indian and negro races.

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[8] The distinction between races is in Spanish America a distinction of rank or class rather han that of color. Bryce, South America, p. 471.

The following summary will make clear the rapid transition of an Indian into a white:

Spaniard + Spaniard = Criollo (white).
Spaniard + Indian = Mestizo.
Spaniard + Mestizo = Castizo.
Spaniard + Castizo = Criollo (white).

Anyone who reads the history of Mexico will acknowledge the importance that the *Mestizos* have had, and those who know the present Mexico will acknowledge also that politically, socially, and educationally the *Mestizos* are the main factors in the life and progress of the nation.

In the Colonial days the position of the *Mestizos* was somewhat uncertain and not very desirable. The Spaniards isolated them and looked down upon them and the Indians scorned them as spurious or bogus Spaniards. But soon the *Mestizos* formed the bulk of the urban population and their activities were felt. They were the bitterest enemies that the Spaniards ever have had in America. When they found themselves barred from political or government positions, which were all in the hands of the Spaniards, the *Mestizos* rebelled and took the field against them. They formed the bulk of the armies that for eleven years fought against Spain (although there were many Criollo officers), and Mexico was freed mainly through their efforts. That is why the majority of our heroes of the War of Independence are *Mestizos*. Morelos, the greatest military general of them all, was a *Mestizo*. Guerrero, the heroic Southerner, who with inconquerable energy fought in his native mountains until his country was free, was also a *Mestizo*.

It would be interesting to find out how many of the presidents of Mexico have been *Mestizos*. It is safe to say that at least two-thirds of them. The Old Man of Iron, Porfirio Diaz, is also a *Mestizo*. There is no doubt that the homogeneous race of future Mexico will be the *Mestizos* race, with strong Spanish characteristics and faint Indian traits.[9]

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[9] The *Mestizo* has the same prominence socially as politically and there is absolutely no distinction between him and a pure white. Bryce, *op. cit.*, 472. The *Mestizos* form the enlightened elements or class of the country in whose hands there was always laid the steering of the Mexican society in the moral, intellectual, and material order of things. Mexico, Its Evolution, p. 27. The true American of the South is the *Mestizo*, the descendant of Spaniards and Indians. F. G. Colderon, Latin America, Its Rise and Progress, p. 357.

Indians

Nowhere in Spanish America should the Indian as a racial element be treated with such attention as in Mexico. Nowhere in America is the Indian population so great. Probably Mexico has as many Indians as the rest of America put together. Out of the sixteen millions of souls in Mexico, at least eight millions are Indians. These simple statements justify the seriousness with which the Indian problem should be taken in dealing with the Mexican problems.

Ethnically the Indian race is a factor, since a current of Indian blood is yet flowing to contribute to the increasing *Mestizo* stock. *Economically* the Indians are very important, because the whole laboring class in the Republic of Mexico is formed by the Indians. Agriculture as a whole lives there because of the Indians. They use old Egyptian methods in the tilling of the soil, but they are really the only *producers* in the economic sense of the word. And, lastly, as a *social* and *political* factor, the Indians must be taken into account. No nation can progress if two-thirds of her population are left out of her social life and civilization. No democracy is possible in a republic in which the great majority of the inhabitants are not fitted to be citizens worthy of the name.

When the Spaniards arrived in the old Anahuac, they found a great Indian population scattered throughout the whole country, genetic groups here and there with differences in language and tribal traditions and customs, but all with the same physical and psychical Indian traits. Some of them had a well organized military government, others a powerful theocracy, having a regular empire under its command. Such was the Aztec Empire, or the republic of Tlaxcala, or the little kingdom of Texcoco. Farther south, isolated and disintegrated tribes were also found, vestiges of those ancient, wonderful, and mysterious Toltec and Maya civilizations. But that was not all; in the far away Sierras, that run parallel to the Gulf of Mexico, and beyond, on the slopes of the abrupt mountains on the Pacific Coast, were many Indian tribes, some of them never conquered by the Spaniards nor by the Mexican Government even to-day. Over all those peoples the Spanish rule was established. The New Spain arose to life, and the *Via-crucis* of the Indians began.

What a broad field for the activities of the Castillian adventurers, with madness for gold and deep aversion to work, to find themselves suddenly the feudal *seigneurs* of a country of unlimited riches and with hundreds of thousands of brown skin serfs to work those treasurers out of mother-terra! They had come for business and meant business, so they went heart and soul into *the work*.

What a pathetic figure, that of the Indian, contemplating, broken-hearted, but nevertheless stoical, his whole country and culture going to pieces in a day! His *teocallis* torn down, his gods trampled upon, his sacred books or hieroglyphical paintings burned, his emperor murdered and thrown on the street, his priests, nobility, and warriors killed. No wonder the unhappy Indian lost all hope and went into submission and slavery with that automatic or animal passivity of a being without soul. He, for the time being, was spiritually dead. He believed that his gods had abandoned him and that all was lost. And thus he dragged on for three centuries "ranking among the most ignorant and hopeless of the human race."[10] The "Conquerors," says President Prescott, "despising them as an outlawed race, without a god in the world, then, in common with their age, held it to be their mission to conquer and convert."

The Spaniards organized their huge enterprise. They divided the best land into large states and allotted to each one of them along with his state a number of Indians "to civilize and *Christianize*," as the royal charts that established those "Encomiendas" read. So, to each Spaniard a number of Indian were "commended," to teach them the language and religion. But the idea of changing these ambitious and rapacious warriors into sweet, patient pedagogues was absurd. They put their unlucky "pupils" to work like beasts in the fields and in the mines. The poor Indians, treated mercilessly and living like animals, died "like flies." Cortés himself was "sorry to see their comrades of arms, so unmindful of the duty of cavaliers of the cross, as to brawl like common banditti over their booty." It was in vain that some priests, like Las Casas, tried with an heroic and self-sacrificing persistence to defend those poor creatures. He went several times to Spain and kneeling before the

[10] Prescott, *op. cit.*, p. 541, Vol. I.

King told him the horrors that he had seen in America and made heartrending appeals for pity and justice for the conquered race. It was all useless. The government of Spain did enact laws for the protection of the Indians. The archives of the Indians are full of magnificent legislative measures to protect the Indians; but all such laws were "obeyed but *not executed.*" In the Colonies, not a ray of hope was found anywhere. The new religion taught the Indians resignation, patience, and obedience and hopes of better life—in the other world.

One word of explanation, not of excuse, for this ugly conduct of the Spaniards. It has been the rule of historians to crowd upon the Spanish Conquerors all the adjectives synonymous to cruel and barbarous, and justly so. Our indignation is aroused by their heartless deeds, but most historians go further and assure us that the conduct of the Spaniards was unique and that they were a disgrace to the whole human race.

In the first place, it is not logical for us now to apply the standards of the twentieth century to measure the actions of the sixteenth century. It is not true that Spaniards alone were disgracing humanity. The whole of Europe was involved.[11] At that time, the Spaniard's conduct was the rule of the conquerors of all the nations. And certainly the Anglo-Saxon peoples have little right to "throw stones." Everyone in the United States knows the remark "that the Puritans first fell on their knees and then on the aborigines."[12] The only Indians that have survived to tell the tale are kept confined in barren "reservation" grounds, as wild animals in a menagerie, and this happening now in the twentieth century and in the very heart of a powerful and cultured nation.

But to continue with our topic. At last Mexico was free. Did the situation of the Indians change? Not in the least. The independence was accomplished by the *Criollos* and *Mestizos*; the Indians also fought, but they never knew why. But the *Criollos* had inherited from their old Colonial ancestors not only their *Encomiendas* and their corresponding number of

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[11] "La Conquete Espagnole avait ete rude pour les races indigenes; il *est juste d'ajoutor*, qu'elle n'etait pas plus douce au XVI^{e} et au XVII^{e} siecle dans les colonies des autres etats." Le Mexique au debut XX^{e}—E. Levasseur, p. 21.

[12] "Wherever the English went always the aborigines disappeared before them." Washington, Origins in American Education, p. 340.

Indians, but also their old prejudice against the Indians. There was between them that deep hate of those who have everything and those who have been despoiled of everything. Long before the independence, the *Criollos* were the real tormentors of the Indians, as they were the ones more closely in contact with them. "The Indians felt more animosity toward the Creoles—*Criollos*—than toward the Europeans. This was natural, since their nearer and more numerous oppressors were Creoles. The revolution was rather a reversal of the conquest, since it fixed the possession and domination of the conquered countries by the descendants of the Spanish Conquerors and settlers."[13] "The Indians only changed tutors," says a Mexican writer, "and the tutor, 'Congress,' to tell the truth, did less for them than the tutor 'Viceroy.'"[14] "The Indian of the present time, undermined by alcohol and poverty, is free according to the law, but a serf by virtue of the permanence of authoritative manners. Petty tyrannies make him a slave. He works now for the *Cacique*, the baron of the new Latin American feudalism. Without sufficient food, without hygiene, he decays and, to forget the misery of his daily lot, he drinks. The great occasions of his civil life—birth, marriage, and death—are subjects of a religious exploitation."[15]

However, since 1869, when the backbone of the old Creoles and Church party was broken, the *Mestizos* government has made well-intentionated, although feeble, attempts for the betterment of the Indians, showing at least its good will. The "Indianista" Society at Mexico City, which has for its aim the defence and protection of the Indians, shows the spirit that now begins to prevail toward the Indians, among the directing class. The good intentions and desires of the leading men must have two dynamic manifestations, first, by extending to the Indians the benefits of education, and, second, by checking all abuses and exploitations that they are subject to by the *Caciques*, or petty town bosses, mostly *Mestizos*."

Physical and Psychical Characteristics of the Indian

The characteristics of the Indians vary a little among the different tribes. Their environment, determining their occu-

[13] Cambridge Modern History, XV, p. 299.
[14] Mexico, Its Social Evolution, p. 31.
[15] Latin America, F. C. Calderon, p. 354.

pation and mode of life, impress upon them its seal. Nevertheless, whether living idly in the suburbs of big cities, or carrying on a vigorous life hunting or warring up on the mountains, or living in their wigwams and miserable huts upon the arid central and northern parts of the plateau engaged in primitive agriculture or humble trades, all these Indians are very much alike in color, physical features, and modes of life and thought. They are usually of medium stature with heavy frame, brown skin, oblong head, with thick black straight hair, large boned face, with slightly prognathous jaws, an aquiline nose giving an air of distinction to the whole appearance, regular size mouth with sensual lips which hide two perfect rows of white teeth, few scattered hairs on the chin, reminding you that the male of the species is there; and, lastly, two soft black eyes of a stoic melancholy, illumine the usually saddened face of the representative of the Indian race.

Intellectually, the Indians have not had, as a whole, a chance during the centuries of their hard physical labor to exercise their mental capacities, so they are as is to be expected. The best sword gathers rust and its edges dull when it remains too long in its scabbard. When the Indians have been educated they have displayed splendid intellectual qualities. However, their minds have not that supreme test of an intellectual capacity, inventiveness. The Indians, helped by a keen sense of perception, are great imitators, and while at the school, they show eagerness to learn, persistence and patience in their studies, which are qualities for success and aptitude for culture.[16]

Emotionally, the Indian offers a striking contrast compared with the *Mestizo* and Spaniard. The Indian is not as impulsive and belongs to a silent race, laughs seldom and rarely aloud. He is sober and reserved with the whites, but tender and affectionate to his own people. The impassiveness of the Indian is proverbial; never a muscle of his face moves, no matter what emotion he is subject to. In the service of the white man, he is honest, loyal, and easily managed, docile and obedient, sometimes to the point of servileness. "I have observed," a bishop of Puebla wrote to a friend during the Colonial days, "that the

[16] In Secondary and Professional Schools the Indians show greater application than the "Mestizos." Mexico. Its Evolution, p. 26.

Indian only gets into the habit of stealing where he lives in contact with the Spaniards." His bravery in war and that Oriental indifference with which he faces death have made of him either miserable cannon flesh, by some ambitious military adventurer and revolutionist, or a splendid and heroic military force that has spent its blood lavishly in defence of the country and her institutions.[17] "The Kafir," says Mr. Bryce, "is like a grown-up child, the Chinese have a curious, quiet alertness and keenness of observation, the Hindus are submissive though watchful, as if trying to take the white man's measure, but the Indian is none of these things. In his obedience there is no servility; he is reserved, aloof, seemingly indifferent to the white man and things in general." There is the dark side to this picture. That intellectual stagnation into which the Indian mind has been sunk by centuries of ignorance, submission, and passivity has made of him a being living in a kind of intellectual atony, without ideals and aspirations. The richness of the country makes it easy for him to get his living without very much effort and his absence of ideals toward social improvement makes his wants few. Adding the enervating warm climate, we have the reasons why the Indian is incorrigible lazy. The oppression under which he has lived and the unfairness with which he has always been treated make him distrustful of strangers and white men. He seldom forgives, and when he has a chance to settle old offences, his hatred gives impulse to the most cruel and brutal revenges.

The Indian has been labeled by many writers as very immoral in his social intercourse. I do not think that he is immoral; I rather say that many of his actions are unmoral, but in general he lives a good life. "I have lived," writes a traveler, "with the South American Indians and I have found among them a chastity of thought that would put to shame many of our highly educated denizens of our cities."[18]

I have read statements made from usually over-zealous missionary travelers, who say that Indians are immoral in their marital relations, that there are many children who have no legitimate parents. In the first place, the Indian is essentially monogamous. In many cases it is true that his marriage has

[17] *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

[18] Quoted from the *Evening Sun*, New York, 29 Jan., 1914.

not a civil or religious sanction, because he does not understand its importance, because he does not have money to pay its expenses, or because he lives too far away from the places where such sanction can be obtained. In the second place, the Indians have their own ceremonies and are perfectly satisfied with them.

They have not forgotten entirely their old traditions and customs, and in many Indian communities such marriage ceremonies are performed by their elders or chiefs. Then a "missionary investigator" comes along and, finding that none of the marriages have any *Christian* sanction, hastily writes down "gross immorality, hundreds of illegitimate children, etc., etc."[19]

Much injustice has been done by piling upon this unlucky race more evil traits than those that it deserves, as an explanation of its degraded position. However, the great guilty one, the white man, will never be justified in his conduct or exculpated of his responsibility for such degraded condition of the Indians, for, miserable as they are . . .

> Yet whose hearts are fresh and simple,
> Who have faith in God and nature,
> Who believe that in all ages
> Every human heart is human,
> That in even savage bosoms
> There are longings, yearnings, strivings. . . .!

What Shall the Future Mexican Race Be and What Are the Elements for Its Vitality?

Some pessimistic prophecies have been made by those who believe that, on the whole, the tropical races are in decadence. They think that such races have not invigorating elements and therefore tend to disappear and sooner or later they will be swept away before the mighty tide of the strong northern races, looking for the rich soils of the equator.[20]

Other writers think that, owing to the unhealthful tropical environment, unsuitable for the white men, the European races will keep themselves out, or will be pushed out by races who can stand successfully the tropical climate. Benjamin Kidd

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[19] Le Indians conserve dans ses airs de musique dans ses mélopées trainantes, le charme et le rêve de ce passè aboli. Et le tout se transmet par des heredites mysterieuses de generations en generations, comme les vieilles legendes et les vieilles chansons dans la memoire des peoples. Jules Claretie le Mexique modern. *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

[20] See F. H. Giddings, Democracy and Empire.

says, "both for climatic conditions and in obedience to the general law of population, already noticed, by which the upper strata of society (to which the white people for the most part belongs) are unable to maintain themselves for any considerable period, we must apparently look forward to the time when all these territories will be almost exclusively peopled by Black and Indian races.[21] Dr. Pearson, too, writes: "The day will come, and perhaps is not far distant, when the European observers will look around to see the globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races, no longer weak for agression or under tutelage, but independent . . . and monopolizing the trade of their own regions. . . . when China and the states of South America by that time predominantly Indian, are represented by fleets in the European seas."[22]

Let us look first into these last two opinions. The tropical lands are inhabited, and will be more so in the future, by a *new* race, neither Indian nor European, but Latin-American, tanned by the torrid sun more than by its Indian inheritance. The facts are against the above statements of Mr. Kidd and Dr. Pearson. The Indian race will disappear. The statistics show that it is disappearing rapidly. In Argentina, Cuba, and the United States, the Indians have almost vanished. In Mexico, the nation most populated by Indians, in one century more than one-third of her Indian population has gone. Two factors are contributing to this rapid process of elimination. First, a law of evolution enters into function: "Only the fittest shall survive," and the weak and unfitted are dying. Bad nourishment, early marriage, poor medical attendance in sickness, or none at all; the child death rate is as high as fifty per cent, according to the last census. The swift current of human evolution, impelled by the said law, is carrying away speedily this racial debris to the unknown. The prophecy of the poet is being realized: "at the arrival of the white man, the mission of the Indian will come to an end and he will sail away into the sunset to the land of the Hereafter."

The second factor is very important. A process of fusion is going on and has been going on for centuries between the Indians and whites. The strong, the healthy, the intelligent Indians

[21] B. Kidd, Social Evolution, p. 311.
[22] Karl Pearson, National Life and Character, Vol. I.

do not die; they are rapidly "becoming whites." Another evolutionary process of natural selection is taking place which gives good biological basis for the future race. An eloquent proof of this statement can be found in the statistics given elsewhere in this work. The *increase* of the *Mestizo* population is almost proportional to the *decrease* of the Indian population. One is being fused into the other.

As to the first writers, who think that the actual tropical races will disappear before a strong tide of other races. Of course they are partially right. The Indians as a pure race will disappear, but the *new race* will never be entirely European. No matter how much European *emigration* (the time of land conquests with its occupation by another race has passed) shall bleach our brown *Mestizos*, there will be forever in their veins remnants of Indian blood to cool down their Latin impulsiveness and vivacity, to temper their nerves in their trying moments with an Indian impassivity and stoicism, as there will be remembrances eternally engraved upon the mighty volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Yxtlazzihuatl. As for ever in the placid evenings, the perfumed breezes of the old Anahuac Valley will hum gently the old legends of that heroic race of bronze.

What will be the future race of Mexico? The answer is already in the reader's mind.

The future race of the Mexican Republic will be the result of the mixture of the European blood, mostly Latin, and Indian.[23] In this fusion the characteristics of the white race will predominate.[24] The *Mestizos* will be in the future, as they have been in the past, the real Mexicans. They will be envigorized more and more by European blood, carried by a never-ceasing emigration; and at the same time their brown ancestors' stock will become thinner and thinner. Such a race, although for culture

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[23] "Everything points to a continuance of the progress of race mixture. It is a rule in all parts of the world, except where religion or strong feeling or race antagonism prevents it. Neither of these hindrances exists in South America; the same is true of Mexico." Bryce, *op. cit.*, p. 585.

1. "An enlightened mixed race, the typical Latin American, will be the dominant element in social and political life in the future."

1. "The true American of the South is the 'Mestizo,' the descendant of Spaniard and Indian; this new race is almost the rule from Mexico to Buenos Aires." F. G. Calderon, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

[24] "In the mixed race the white seems usually to predominate." Bryce, 585.

2. "The mixed blood population, while retaining many Indian qualities, is more strongly Spanish in its present characteristics." Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

European, will have, however, strong characteristics of its own. Though I do not go as far as Burkle in believing that environment is everything in shaping the characteristics of the races, nevertheless it is a scientific fact that the surroundings impress their seal upon their peoples and that hand in hand with racial inheritance make the body and soul of a race. Bryce says, "Blood is only one factor in the making of men; environment and the influence of the reigning intellectual type count for more."

Happily the race problem in Mexico is clear and its solution is being made automatically, according to nature's laws. It must be kept in mind that there are only *two races* and that those two races—Indian and white—are mingling themselves freely and without prejudices. Helping to the success of this mixture, and acting as a great leveler, is the powerful tropical environment, thus tending to make such races homogeneous, which biologically, socially, and politically is a condition for preservation and stability. As in a homogeneous race, the consciousness of kind is strong, the feeling of nationality is powerful, and democracy is possible. Anyone who has come into contact with the individuals of the new race will agree that such individuals possess in great degrees the two traits just mentioned. Naturally there is not yet a definite type of the Mexican race, since it has just now the instability of everything that it is in the process of formation. What are we just now? The learned sociologist, Argentine Sariniento, began his book, "The Conflict of Races," thus: "Are we Europeans? So many bronze faces give to us a negative answer. Are we Indians? Smiles of contempt of our blond ladies are perhaps our only answer. Are we mixed—? No one wants to be!" Although in some places and with certain persons that might be true to-day in South America, in Mexico our ideals of race are more crystallized, and to such questions we always answer: "*We are Mexicans!*"

Problems of Education Coming Out of These Conditions

What is the task of the school in this race transition? I should say that its main work is to accelerate it. I have said that there is no prejudice against Indians; the only gap between

the races which necessarily makes the process of fusion slow is the difference in education.[25]

The importance of the popular school as an educative factor in Mexico is obvious. In a highly civilized country the importance of the school has been over-estimated. There are other educational agencies as powerful or more so than the school—a cultured family, the Church, books and newspapers, theaters, social gatherings, etc., with which the people cannot avoid coming into daily contact. In Mexico the situation is different. Aside from the big cities, there are only two possible and natural educational agencies, the Church and the school—backed by the government. The Church has failed as an educational factor. So the school alone stands as the only hope for enlightenment.

It has been said that education is a "conscious evolution." Nowhere is it more important that this should be its view than in Mexico. Davidson says that education is the highest method of social evolution. Certainly the modern school knows artificial means of forming habits, understands how to handle those delicate chords called the sentiments which mould ideals, is familiar also with the manipulation and development of the body to make the individual strong, efficient, *better fitted* for the struggle for life and therefore better fitted as a social being to contribute to the social betterment. That is how education in its true conception is a "conscious evolution." It is easy to see and to value the importance of *this type of education* in the midst of a young race in full period of formation.

What a splendid task for the school in Mexico! *Aim:* To build a nation. *Pupils:* Some millions of human beings that are longing for *light*. *Subject matter: Anything* that will help the pupils to meet their daily needs and help to train them to take their part in the formation of the new nation. No, there is no need of the complicated regulation of a too technical school system. There is no need of an elaborated and over-crowded school curriculum. Let us in a few lines sketch what may be taken as a plan, to show mainly on what basis the organization of the educational system in Mexico might be worked out.

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[25] "There is no prejudice against the Indian in Mexico, and so when they are educated they are accepted in marriage among the best families of pure Spanish blood." M. Romero. "Mexico and the United States," p. 75.

First of all, the education of the Indians is a national necessity, so it is a national problem, and therefore the Federal Government has the right and the duty to handle it. In other words, since the Indians are spread all over the land of the Republic, the educational system must be centralized. Such centralization might be accomplished upon the same basis that the military centralization is accomplished. The Republic may be divided into educational zones, marked not by geographic positions, but according to the ethnic distribution of the Indians. There are extensive zones of land inhabited only by certain tribes; for instance, the Maya tribes are located in the State of Yucatan and the Territory of Quintana Roo; the Otomies tribes are living in the States of Hidalgo and Central Vera Cruz. In this State the Totonacs are also located. The Tarasco Indians inhabit the State of Michocan; the Mexicans (old Aztecs) are distributed in some Central States and the Federal District, and the Mixtecos and Zapotecos tribes live in the State of Oaxaca.

The territory which embraces each tribe should be made the territory of an educational zone, which shall have its superintendent with his headquarters established in the heart of his zone. All those zones should be under the general direction and watchful eyes of the Federal Minister of Public Education, who shall have a special office with a staff of general superintendents, whose mission shall be to visit the zones.

Of course, there are many pedagogical reasons why centralization should be accomplished. They are the same reasons which the leading educators in this country are giving when arguing for a central educational agency in every State and in the District of Columbia, with more powers than those that the Bureau of Education has at present time. In Mexico, I must add, there is yet another powerful economic reason. The States of the Republic have rarely wilfully neglected to build schools. The majority of the States have worked hard to build up schools, but many have failed to organize a decent school system because of the lack of money. The Federal Government has better means to do it.

We find in Mexico enemies of centralization, armed with the same old political objections of state rights and sovereignty—most of them do not know as yet the pedagogical objections. The

answer to this political objection is logical. Is it worth while to discuss the right of the States to keep their inhabitants in the most ignominious ignorance, endangering thus the very life of the State whose rights they are so zealous to guard? Besides, speaking plainly, Mexico has always been a centralized nation, politically, religiously, and—I am willing to prove it—educationally.

Going on with our "sketch" of a plan, so much for administrative machinery. Now the subject matter. Those rudimentary schools should be necessarily narrow and intensive in their curriculum. They must attempt *little*, but do it *thoroughly*. In planning the curriculum, let us leave alone "the mental faculties" of the poor little Indians and not try to develop them with infinitesimal "doses" of some abstract, insipid, sometimes bitter, and almost always useless "science." Let us have in our schools that old Spartan or Roman simplicity that was so efficient in making men.

The true conception of education is that it must tend to make the individual efficient socially. The requisites of a socially efficient individual in their simplest terms are these: *First*, he must be physically fit to work and to form a family. *Second*, he must have ability enough to be a sound producer and consumer. *Third*, he must possess, intelligently, a sum total of knowledge sufficient to give him an idea of the civilization in the midst of which he is living, with a conception, a simple one, of the struggles of humanity to get where it is now. *Fourth*, he must keep in his heart *con amore* the moral and esthetic ideals of the group or society in which he lives, to help him to form his character. Recapitulating in three words, he must be able to *do*, to *think*, and to *love*. With these three words in mind, our Indian school curriculum should be made. So the school, wherever it is situated, no matter how poor its resources are, must be able to form healthful habits, direct and improve the occupations of the people of its locality, enrich the minds of such people with valuable cultural knowledge, and, last, inspire ideals which are the backbone of manly character. The Indians are a rich "material" for this kind of work. They are not hopeless beings. "Every group," says a writer, "is capable of contributing to the common stock something uniquely its own, something that in the full fruition of civilization cannot be

spared." The school should help the Indians to make their contribution.

It is indispensable, before planning any course of study or teaching any detailed educational policy, *to know well* the people among whom our schools are going to operate, to understand perfectly the wants of such people, and to be familiar with the possibilities and opportunities of improvement that the surroundings of the community offer. It would be a pedagogical catastrophe to write courses of study on the desk in the Central Office at Mexico City for all the schools of the country without the knowledge mentioned, because then those courses of studies would be the same for every school, which would be another educational sacrilege.

In preparing for the making of the curricula, an intelligent and experienced teacher should be sent to study carefully the ethnic region in which an educational zone is to be established, to learn the language of the tribe—every tribe has a different language, and those living far from the towns do not speak Spanish at all—to observe their customs and occupations. The Indians' occupations are usually basketry, rudimentary clay work or pottery, primitive agriculture, and commerce of fruits and vegetables. The great majority are *peones* or agricultural laborers on big ranches. Every one of these pursuits should be made an object of a detailed study by the teacher "explorer," with the view of improving their methods and results. The natural productions of the region, whether exploited or not, should also be made an object of his observation and study. Then, with all these important data and a good census of the school population, the bureau of education at Mexico City can start its general outlines for a tentative course of study for the zone that has just been studied, in close contact and agreement with the now "zone" expert or Aztec, Otomie, or Maya "specialists."

Another very important problem is the question of teachers. No matter how good the course of study and how lofty our school ideals, if the teacher does not understand them or is unable to carry them into practice all the former efforts and careful planning are useless. In a great school, the teacher is one of the most important factors; in a little country school, the teacher is nearly everything.

Primary normal schools should be planned with no other purpose than to enlist and train a body of teachers for this great educational crusade. In planning the studies for these normal schools, our little Indian rural schools should be kept in the foreground and they should be the guide. Here, again, no accumulation of science should be required, nor scholarly erudition in pedagogical doctrines and methods. Two years of sound theories, coupled with sound practice, should be enough. The requirements for admission might be the certificate of elementary and superior grammar school. Each "zone expert" and future superintendent may bring with him a carefully selected number of young ambitious natives to be trained in those schools at the expense of the Government, to be used later as teachers in their own communities. However, in my opinion, this policy should not be made too general. Scholarships should be established for the "Mestizos" or whites to study in those normal schools, and then they should be sent to perform this truly missionary and patriotic work. They should be the link that must unite the two races. They must go as messengers from the civilized Mexican of today to the civilized Mexicans of the future. The Indians will see in those young whites, coming to them, no longer with the whip of the slave in their hands, but with a heart full of sympathy, the uplifted hand of their white brothers who at last have remembered them.

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CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL INSTITUTION

The Government

The government is the social institution that offers perhaps the best ground for the study of the customs and culture of a people. The ideals of liberty, as well as the stagnation of political inspirations, can be detected in the governmental machinery of a nation. Behind the brutal despotism of a Persian king, millions of serfs are kneeling, with fearing hearts, in an intellectual and political atony. In the Greek democracy, with its ideas of individual freedom and self-government, the whole personality of the Greek people is reflected. The sacredness of the home and personal rights, upon which the English put so much emphasis, gives the standard of the strong English people, so zealous of their rights and so conscious of their duties. The great economic issues behind which the aspirations of the parties are hidden in a political campaign show distinctly that the commercial character of the country reflects itself in the government of the United States.

So it is with every nation's government. It shows really what such a nation is and what are her standards of right and duties. A nation has the government that she deserves or that which her degree of culture allows her to have. The principles upon which a government rests are the laws. If we know what a law is and means in a political institution, it is easy to understand the close relation that there is between a nation's culture and customs and the government.

A true law is nothing but a custom crystallized. A community has been living under certain standards; some members of it break those standards, the whole community resents it and makes compulsory the obedience of what their custom has established, and a law is enacted. To enact a law, the people must feel first its necessity, because it is going to regulate what is already functioning. A nation must have only the laws that

her civilization can tolerate. Solon said: "I have given you the best laws that you can tolerate." Moses explains that "God gave the laws that our perversity could bear." An ideal legislator must understand the temperament of his people, their psychology; must know their past and understand their present, so as to make a body of laws which will be to the nation what the conscience is to the individual. Laws are traditions consecrated and traditions are the habits of a nation, as a habit of a person is but a personal tradition.

Treating the political aspect of any Latin-American country, some peculiar situations are found. Contrary to this conception of law, the body of laws which were made to rule those young Spanish republics was not based upon what these nations are, but upon what they should wish to be. Such laws do not represent the crystallized customs and traditions of their peoples, but the aspirations of their legislators. The logical result has been that there is a great disparity between our actual political machinery and laws on our statute books.

The Latin-American countries have been "promenading" among the nations of the world as republics, but it is a matter of common knowledge that they are "masquerading," because they are not yet republics.[1]

Mexico has had her share in this political carnival. Her government is republican, and her constitution is one of the best documents of its kind. Ideas of equality resting upon the human rights are found there hand in hand with democracy and liberty. But in actual practice our magnificent constitution has been kept in the most dusty corner of the government offices.

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[1] "South American Republics have known only two forms of government. . . . First there is an executive, the limits of his power ill-defined and often imposing his will by force in essence arbitrary and personal, and feared rather than respected by the people; secondly, the Cabildos and their modern deliberative bodies, never really elective."—Dawson, South American Republics, Vol. I, p. 55.

"In *Argentina*, there seem to be no political ideas among the people for united action and energetic citizenship." p. 28.

"In *Colombia*, politics means holding office and drawing salary and talking of the nation's honor." p. 60.

"The government in *Chili*, in spite of its name, has been an oligarchy, composed of the best families of Santiago, who have controlled everything, . . . no attempt was ever made to suppress the farce of universal suffrage."

"The *great issue in all South American* republics is, in short, whether republican institutions, representative governments, and local authorizing shall become a reality in these countries and not a mere illusory program."—Theo. Childs, Spanish American Republics, pp. 28, 60, 128, 129.

Why have our trials in the republican form of government been unsuccessful so far? A nation, as an individual, must try in order to learn, but our political mentors, lacking pedagogical insight, gave Homer's Odyssey to us to enjoy, forgetting that we did not know the alphabet. In other words, Mexico was not prepared for such a kind of government.

The Spanish-American nations have nothing in their inherited political traditions to back up a democratic government in the Teutonic sense. Mexico, before the Conquest, was ruled by an autocratic emperor. He was vested with supernatural powers and the Mexicans regarded him with the same veneration that a Japanese of to-day treats his emperor.[2] There were laws and councils, but the Aztec emperor's will was the supreme law. Their religion was as imperative and tyrannic as their government. In the family relations, the father had the same supreme power in his entire relations with his family as had the patrician Roman head of a family. The Indian was a living automaton. The Spanish Conquest took place and Spain gave to Mexico what she had. The Spanish Colonial Government of Mexico was therefore an autotheocratic one. The viceroy's power was as omnipotent or more so than the power of the King of Spain himself. The Church's fondness for *democracy* and freedom is too well known to be mentioned here. The Conquerors brought with them their old ideas of semi-independent feudal divisions with a ruling class and an underworld of serfs. Wherever a Mexican looked, only the word *obey* was to be found. But winds of liberty swept the land and after a bloody war, independence was consummated and the present "Republic" came into being.

To frame the laws or constitutions, our legislators were inspired by the philosophical theory of the French Revolution and the "ill understood constitutional notions borrowed from England and the United States."

The result of such legislation was to be expected. A decree cannot change the social make-up of a people. The Northern Republic government after which ours was modeled grew out of local self-government and rested on the English or Teutonic political idea of strong nationality depending upon self-government. As we have seen, in Mexico there was an abso-

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[2] See Mexico al traves de los Siglos, by Alfredo Chavero, Vol. I,

lute absorption of the individual into the State and the Church. Those two institutions directed everything, regulated everything, and controlled everything. To believe that a true republican government could be established with such citizens in a fortnight and by virtue of an ideal Constitution was the stupendous mistake that our political fathers made. No, a "mode of government cannot be imported." To believe that, because a democratic organization of government was so successful elsewhere, it was going to be so with us was a mistake. "It would be as futile," says LeBon, "to persuade fish to live in the air, under the pretext that arial respiration is practiced by all superior animals." "It is a childish chimera," he adds, "to believe that Constitutions count for anything in the destinies of the people. The destinies of a people lie in themselves and not in exterior circumstances."

The cardinal doctrine of any sound political system is that rights and duties should be in equilibrium. That has never been the case in our political life. The Government, and, behind it, the privileged class, has had all the rights and ignored all the duties.[3] "Under the outward forms of written laws," says Kidd, "they have displayed a general absence of a sense of public and private duty."[4]

Our political system is individualistic and moves around one man. Questions of personality and not principles of government are the theme of our political discussions. The Indians had their Emperor and their *Cacique*, the Spaniards had their King and their *Caudillo*, and we have our President and *jefe politico*, with exactly the same powers and functions. Our whole political machinery is moved by the *Cacique* or *jefe politicos*, who are the bosses of the towns and who have no responsibility regarding their acts so long as they are in harmony with the plans of the President, who is the boss of the nation. There are legislative powers, to be sure, but its members seem to have byzantine natures. Such are the real political conditions of our nominal democratic government.

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[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 312.

[4] See Candillismo, Sociologia Argentina, p. 249. Jose Ingenieres.

"The *Candillo* is the pivot of the political system; leader of a party, of social group, or a family whose important relations make it powerful, he enforces his tyrannical will upon the multitude. In him reside the power of government and the law. His authority is invisible, superior to the Constitution and its laws."

F. Garcia Calderon, Latin-American—The Political Problem, Chapter III, p. 365.

But the noble dreamers who gave us our laws were not wholly wrong. Law must be sometimes a check to certain tendencies, with hopes of future betterment. Our Constitution is an aspiration. It stands as an ideal to be reached. It is a sacred light that guides our painful but not hopeless march towards a true democracy.

To believe that, because our people have lived under a personalistic government, they have no love of liberty and no desire for a better government is a great mistake. The Mexicans are as jealous of their political freedom as the most patriotic people on earth, and they are ready, yes, too ready, to sacrifice themselves to improve their political conditions. It is remarkable to find among people who never have tasted the sweetness of a true democracy such fondness for equality and political freedom, such unselfishness to work for its cause, even to sacrifice. The oriental satraps found it an easy task to govern despotically their thousands of servile and passive people. The Latin-American satraps are far from feeling it an easy position in which they know their days are counted. Their dreadful enemy, the revolution, is always staring them in the face; a longing for freedom, a jealousy for their rights—which they never get—move the masses to form behind a *leader*—another satrap to be—who promises them order and justice and prosperity, and who has always unfolded before their eyes a *proclama* announcing that the Constitution *has been violated*.[5]

This has been the origin of almost all the Latin-American revolutions. When the people do not get a square deal from their government, if such people are servile they will remain quiet and resigned, but if they are virile they will *rise* against the tyrant and a revolution will take place. In the case of the people oppressed by a despot, a revolution is a right. That is the only way in which a government can be changed, when it does not fulfill the promises and refuses to get out. But the wrong lies deeper and it is not cured by revolution. We have aspirations to a democracy, and democracy means self-government, efficient citizenship, and as long as we depend on a government based on a personality, rather than on a principle and an

[5] "A revolution is indeed a sort of popular election. And there is something noble in the loyalty and sacrifice with which multitudes of poor people . . . have fought for their leaders and followed them to death."—Robert E. Speer, South American Problems, p. 32.

intelligent civic organization, our hopes of better government never will be realized. The "man on horseback," the "strong hand," or the "man of the hour" are but names for the same thing, a despot, more or less intelligent, more or less cultured, but with the eternal thorn of personal ambition and selfish purposes in all his acts.

Anyone who reads the history of the revolutions in Mexico will be surprised to find how the people have fought to take away from the privileged class, backed by the Church, the political power of the nation. Even in the revolution that now is taking place in Mexico, the people are not fighting just for the love of war. At the bottom of it all is the hunger of our peasants for a piece of land of their own and a free government.

The strength, the courage, and the everlasting persistence with which these people fight for their rights give splendid material to mold into good citizenship. Think of those energies directed into their right channels by a wise and honorable government and a sane and proper education! What a mistake to think that, because we are not yet fit for a democratic form of government, we never will be! From people who loved liberty and fought tyranny the living democracies have been made. I do not despair of seeing a genuine democracy blossoming south of the Rio Grande. The road has been and is painful. The world is now pointing at us as a band of savages, because we, unhappily, are always measured by our failures rather than by our progress. The world forgets that all young nations have passed through a critical period—a period of hesitancy, of intestine struggles and vicissitudes. What nation has not founded its stability and prosperity and happiness upon blood and sorrows? What country has not a martyr or hero to consecrate and the memory of a glorious past struggle to venerate?

Where other people have reached, we will also. Democracy is not for one race or one people alone. Justice, virtue, and courage are not and cannot be *monopolized* by any race or nation. I know that, for those whose knowledge about Mexico does not extend outside of the information through a yellow paper, the Mexicans that are looking forward to a democratic government are idealists. But so long as those dreamers are willing to work toward the accomplishment of their ideals, they are dreaming future realities. "Mexican idealists," writes a New

York paper, "are like honest Democrats and Republicans in the United States. The dreams that they dream are bound to come true. There is a mighty difference between an idealist and a visionary. Washington's ideal was a free nation, Jefferson's ideal was a free people, Lincoln's ideal was freedom for all without regard to race and color. *Every one* of these ideals was ridiculed by elements like those which now sneer at the hopes and aspirations of Mexico's most devoted sons. Some idealists south of the Rio Grande have seen the light dimly, but that they have seen it at all is a fact to be recorded to their honor."[6] And *education* is going to be the mighty hand which will help "those dreamers" to push off upon smoother seas!

Before going into the subject of education from the political point of view, I shall give a summary of our present political organization. The present Constitution of Mexico was promulgated on February 5, 1857. By its terms Mexico is considered a Federal Republic divided into twenty-seven States, with three Territories and one Federal District—where the Federal authorities are—each State has the right to manage its own local affairs, while the whole are bound together in one body politic by the fundamental law of the land, the Constitution. The powers of the Federal Government are divided into three branches, the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The legislative power is vested in a Congress, consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate. The executive is a President of the Republic, and the judicial in Federal Courts. Representatives are elected by the suffrage of married males, if eighteen years of age, and twenty-one years of age if unmarried (at the vote of one member for every 40,000 inhabitants or fraction exceeding 20,000), and hold their places for two years. The Senate consists of two members from each State, of at least thirty years of age, who hold their places for four years. The President is elected by electors popularly chosen in a general election, and holds office for six years. In case of his sudden death or disability, the Vice-President, who is also President of the Senate, officiates in his place. The States have an executive officer, the Governor, a legislative power, the Legislature, and judicial power, the State Courts.

[6] The New York *World*.

Education, the Main Hope of a Future Mexican Democracy

What are the essential conditions of a Democratic Government? Democracy means government of the people. The fundamental condition of a Democratic State is that the actual power of government rest on the masses of the people of such State. There must be a substantial equality of legal rights and obligations and opportunities. Christianity, stating that "*all men are equal before God*," gives the basis for Democracy to affirm *that all men are equal before the law.* But in order to act as one body politic a democratic society must be homogeneous in its make-up. Social relations in such a democratic group presuppose an actual coming together of the individual elements.

A democratic social aggregation must be harmonious in its habits of thought and action. Its members, who are united and organized for a common purpose, should come into contact, mingle, and converse to form an intelligent social mind, to hold and crystallize a public opinion. The heart of the community must beat with the same sympathies, beliefs, ideals, and longings for the common welfare.

"Democracy makes of every man a king." No other political organization bestows upon him more honors and greater respect. No other social organization gives him more freedom of action and greater opportunity to display his personality and his initiative. But no other form of government puts upon the shoulders of its members greater responsibilities. The citizen must be as conscious of his duties as he is zealous of his rights. He must have the cultural and spiritual possession of his group in order to feel that paternal regard for its members. He must be educated if he wants to be an intelligent voter, and if his State is to have a sound, orderly, and progressive legislation and administration.

Is it possible for Mexico, at present, to have such a Democratic government as that described above? Is it possible for the average Mexican to fulfill the requirements of a true and active citizenship? If the reader has followed this paper up to this point, he will give, without doubt, the same answer that I do. Mexico has magnificent possibilities of becoming a true democratic nation. A young crop of energetic, intelligent, and patri-

otic Mexicans have but one aspiration, but one ideal—that is, to build up in our country a real democratic government. They are now keenly alive that, to accomplish this noble task, there is but one way: to educate the ignorant masses, to be just with them, and to *make* the directing classes give them a square deal. They know too well that under the present conditions a democratic government is Utopian. They know that between them, who are but two-tenths of the people, and the rest of the Mexicans there is an abyss of ignorance. How under the existing conditions can these eight-tenths of ignorant Mexicans be expected to act as cultured and conscious democratic society should act?

"Good government machinery," says a writer, "can make it relatively easy for the people to govern themselves, at least it tends to that direction. But there is a limit to that tendency. *There is no devised machinery automatic enough to provide good government in the hands* of an *illiterate* and *half-civilized people.*" And now, being more specific, here are some opinions regarding the matter.

"Briefly, we may say that the citizens," writes Theo. Childs, "do nothing and can do nothing against their parasital rulers because they are not organized and not prepared or educated for republican institutions."[7]

"Democratic principles have been proclaimed in the broadest terms," observes Mr. Bryce, "but thinking men and even unthinking men cannot but dimly feel that no government, however good its intentions, can apply such principles in a country where seven-eights of the people are ignorant, unfit to exercise political rights."[8]

Referring to the oligarchic government of the Spanish America, Professor Bingham says: "One cannot help feeling that that is the only possible outcome of an attempt to stimulate the forms of a republican government in countries whose inhabitants are not educationally and perhaps racially prepared for it."[9]

Georges Clemenceau remarks in his book, "South America of Today," that there is little homogeneity in the masses who are

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[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 328.
[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 412.
[9] Across South America, p. 155.

scattered and separated by land and ideas and one cannot expect from them any concerted political action.

Dr. Brown expresses himself thus: "The people have to learn that there is no such thing as liberty in the abstract, that public opinion must be educated in usages of peaceful discussion, and that revolutions are not a panacea for all political ills. Self control has to be acquired."[10]

Is there any doubt of the importance of the school as the—I am tempted to say—only panacea for our political ills? The school is everywhere the foundation of any democratic government; but in Mexico the school is more than that, it is the salvation of our nationality.

Task of the School in a Democracy

Aim. It must be kept in mind always that before being a *citizen* the child is going to be *a man*. *All men are equal* was—and it is in many Latin-American republics—the old democratic slogan. Yet we are confronted with the psychological fact that there is an absolute inequality among mankind; inequality in capacities, inequality in disposition and ability, inequality in strength and character. The school should understand the true meaning of that old maxim: In a democratic society all men are equal before the opportunities that such a society offers. In the feast of its prosperity, all men must have an equal chance to share it. The school should prepare individuals, help to develop the best within his scope, in order to make him able to reach the highest plane according to his natural capacities. The school must develop "the habit of responsibility," but at the same time must give the tools of self-help, the means to realize the personal independence and self-direction. "A healthy democracy is indeed a training in judgment and self control as applied to political actions," says Cooley.

The Pupil. He must do his own thinking, always and everywhere. He must feel, and actually be, responsible for his own acts and should be educated to stand on his own feet and face "the music" courageously. Let him clearly understand what liberty means. Among children, especially of the Latin race, liberty means *to do* as you *please*. He should know that his rights end where the rights of his neighbor begins. There is

[10] *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

another *attitude* of conduct, which I want developed in our children. The lack of such characteristic is very noticeable among the Latin people in general and Mexicans in particular. It has been one of the sources of our political troubles: *To suffer a defeat gracefully.* I have learned to admire the Americans more in their defeats than in their victories. They all are good losers. No resentment, no bitterness, no vindictiveness, a dry "all right" accompanied by a cold Yankee smile, and all is over.

The Curriculum—Its Educational Connections with a Democracy and with the Citizen

Language. To have the same language is as essential for a nation as to have the same land. The Indians will never be Mexicans, unless they learn to speak the national language. The duty of our schools is not only to teach the Spanish language, but to cause it to be loved. This fondness for the language should be fostered, at the beginnings, by a wise selection of reading materials. There are fairy tales that belong to the children of all countries; these should be presented. Short stories having as their theme national legends and old Mexican traditions should not only be read, but dramatized as well; all in a clear, simple, and easy style, for which the sonorous and musical Spanish language is so suitable. In the advanced grades, especially in our urban schools, the love of the language must be more intellectual or more intelligent. Our pupils should read and develop an esthetic appreciation of our classical authors. They must be taught to read and enjoy our *literary gems*, the *genuine ones.* There are in Mexico many little books of cheap literary value and other so-called anthologies, written especially for children. Based on the belief that anybody can write for children since—they think—the only didactic condition of a book for children is to be *simple* and *easy* and *short*, these amateurs in education have *collected* or *written* stories. Indeed, they are *simple* and *easy* to the point of stupidity. Some are really an offence to the average intelligent pupil.

Civics. To comprehend the institutions of the land, to understand and be familiar with the methods of municipal, state, and national government and arouse an interest to improve and serve in those institutions is the civic preparation that a democ-

racy requires for its citizens. And it is the task of the school to prepare these citizens accordingly. In connection with this subject, I remember that we read at school some pamphlets or "Manual of Civics," which were nothing but dry extracts taken from our laws. A few days ago, while reading a newspaper from Mexico City, I came across the approved list of text-books for the next school year. The "Manual of Civics" was there. We need better books, with more interest and vital discussions about the problems of the community and their relation to its citizens. I am going to give a summary of the topics selected in some text-books, as the easier way to give an idea of how this subject should be treated:

"Good Citizenship," by S. Richman and I. Wallack. "This book is planned," the authors say, "to meet the needs of fourth year (fourth grade) children." It is dedicated to the boys and girls of America, "with hope and prayer that it may help to make them true citizens." *Table of Contents:* The Fire Department—engine and fire house; lessons fires teach; how citizens can help the Fire Department. The Police Department—noble duty of the police; stories of police heroes; how police keep order and fight crime; how citizens can help the police. This, as well as the chapter on the Fire Department, ends with "an afternoon with the police." Department of Health—how to fight diseases; how citizens can help guard the public health. All is written in a delightful and entertaining style.

Going a little higher, we find books with more definite and concrete civic notions. "The Government by the People," by R. H. Fuller, offers a good example of its kind. The aim of the book is to give facts for the practical information of the voter. *Contents:* Government by elections. Qualifications for voting. Voting on Election Day. Bribery and Intimidation. Parties and their organization. Party Platforms of 1904. The writer avoids technical terms and treats the problems unpretentiously.

Still a more detailed and complete treatment of this subject is found in the book, "Training for Citizenship," by J. W. Smith. It is an elementary treatise on the rights and duties of citizens. It would be helpful to the teacher more than to the pupils.

Nature Study and Geography. Engaged in nature study, and while running merrily through the fields after a new "speci-

men," who mockingly flaps its golden wings, the child should feel the *emotion* of the *landscape*, which later in life he will remember tenderly, coupled with *home* recollections. The geography study should put the pupil in close and sympathetic touch with all that is beautiful and good in his country. He must know and love her people, admire her natural beauties, appreciate her richness, and be able to embody all that into a patriotic affection for his "terra patria."

History. History is a great field to arouse and cultivate a true national spirit. No other subject offers better opportunity for it. No other subject has been so mistreated. What has been the function of history in our schools? History has been a long list of dates, with its burden of battles and biographies of great men. Lately, some improvements in our textbooks have been introduced, but there still remains in them the defect of almost all our histories in Mexico. This is that they are not histories at all, but one-sided account of events in which imagination takes the place of a scholar's erudition. The authority for statements is seldom given. But this is not all! The aim of the historian is not to narrate the events, but to slander and blacken *the other side.* There are no middle grounds; fairness and coolness in judgment is rare. Therefore, in the War of Independence, the Spaniards were cruel rascals that could hardly be recognized as men. In our civil struggles, if the historian belongs to the liberal party, of course the liberals were the heroes and the conservative party was composed of traitors and robbers. If a conservative historian writes, of course he also *makes history* and the poor liberals are no less than savages and bandits. Think of the effect of all this stuff, which is called history, put into the hands of our little countrymen; whose impressions are going to be lasting! Our *history* has been the worst obstacle in our national cohesion.

No, history has another noble and higher place. It should be a source of inspiration. It should be the apotheosis of our national heroes. We should find there no line of unfairness to foster hatred and ill will toward our fellow men. Neither will the history be a place for spectacular narrations which put in relief the brutal phase of human nature. It is cruel to darken the rosy thought of a child with bloody descriptions. It is criminal to muddle the limpid conscience of a boy with early

odiousness. Someone may smile, thinking that I want to make little angels out of the common "average" little rascals who attend our schools. No one detests more than I do an effeminate and too "dandy" education and no one admires more than I, a manly training. The following examples will, I hope, clear my position.

While treating the torment of Cuauhtemoc by the Conquerors, the contempt for death, the heroic attitude of the great Indian should be emphasized, instead of the cruelty and brutality of the Spaniards. During the American Intervention, the Americans were assaulting the Castle of Chapultepec, which is also the Military School. All was lost and only a handful of cadets were defending their *alma mater*; Melgar, a child, sixteen years old, who was the sentry at the door of the Entrance Hall, died face toward the enemy and firing to the last. The enemy fired at him only after a manly refusal to surrender. As he fell the American officer, at the head of the attacking column, jumped forward and, taking off his hat, kissed the still warm forehead of the child hero. The other boys were defending their school valiantly, resisting the invaders, room by room, floor by floor. The Mexican flag was still floating in one of the turrets of the Castle. Suddenly, an American appeared near the turret and ran toward the flag. Escutia, another boy cadet, the standard bearer, was on guard there. As he saw the big, muscular, and massive, blond Yankee, advancing heavily, Escutia quickly took the flag down, hid it in his breast, and threw himself down the rocky precipice. To-day, upon the place where the pierced body of this Spartan hero fell, stands a beautiful monument, and every year, until 1910, the American Ambassador used to go on the eighth of September and deposit a wreath of roses upon it.

Such should be the *spirit* with which a theme of history is approached. Why take the study of history as a means of arousing the sleeping, but never dead, instinctive aversion among peoples? One day, an "observation lesson" in history was being given in one of the fashionable schools of Upper Manhattan, and the topic was the assault of Chapultepec in the Mexican War. I was among the student "observers." I saw a boy with golden curls and clear blue eyes describe with innocent delight how hundreds of Mexicans were slain, seemingly

unaware that they too were human beings. How I wished to tell that boy, to those children, how in that battle other boys, almost of the same age and with similar childish faces and curly *black* hair, had died—died in the early spring of their lives when everything was love, hopes, and smiles for them! I wonder what reaction my story would have had in the frank and innocent hearts of those children? For myself, that was one of the most profitable lessons that I have ever "observed," although I confess that I did not *see* whether the "five formal steps" were *properly placed.*

Do you not think that there are many other ways of inspiring patriotism and love for our own country?

Military Drill. In connection with physical training in the school let us continue the military exercises as a special civic preparation. These exercises now come at regular class periods and are in charge of officers of the army. There are many qualities which develop with military duties whose possession the Latin pupils badly need. In a stern military training the people learn how to obey, the high sense of discipline. The sense of solidarity which manifests itself as fellow feeling, and a sentiment of duty and of comradeship, are so important in a democratic community, although at the beginning all these qualities are only skin deep, because they are the result of external and compelling disciplinary measures. Nevertheless, as time passes, slowly, by an unconscious association of reflexes, this feeling of duty and discipline becomes an internal and habitual force which rarely fails to influence the conduct. However, the idea of the militarization of our schools should be cast aside. A regular military system in the school damages the cornerstone of a democracy which is the individuality and free development of opinions and actions. A complete military school system will be a sacrilege to democracy. For the masses military service is very necessary in Mexico. It is an element of education and a help to our national solidarity. Regarding the schools, there may be established special classes of military exercises, or arrangements should be made to go camping for a few weeks every school year, in order to carry out in those camps a military organization and training.

Music. Every civilized nation has some songs that are called national. We have, too. It would be an excellent practice to

teach and have our children sing those songs in the school. Here our national hymn must be sung, too, with the reverence and respect that is due to it.

The Teacher and School Management. What should be the school spirit and policy in a democracy? It should be a spirit in which freedom and responsibility, right and duty to one's self and to the whole school should stand in prominent place in the pupil's minds and hearts. In the words of Irving King:[11] "The pupils should be taught to participate in the government of the school as they afterwards must in the government of the community and State. The pupils should feel that they have a public duty in the school community as they will later have in the adult community. They should be carefully trained in school life to see their relations to law and order and their enforcement in the school, as they must later see them in adult life, if they do their duty as law-abiding and law-enforcing citizens." "Men," says Cooley, "are little to be stampeded in matters regarding which they have a trained habit of thought and action."

[11] King, Social Aspects of Education, p. 291.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

Its Development, Present Conditions, Needs, and Suggestions for its Improvement

Indian Education

The education of the Aztecs, like their government, was military and theocratic. The schools were annexed to the temples. Each *teocalli* or temple had a *calmecac* or school. There were two kinds of schools, one for the children of the aristocracy and the other for the common people. These popular schools were numerous and were located in almost every quarter in Mexico City. The children were received there at the age of four or five years, but officially the education began at six or nine years of age. Such education had a religious character; the boys were drilled in the routine of monastic discipline. There was, however, practical work to be done by the pupils. They had to sweep the temple and the school, decorate the shrines of the gods with flowers, feed the sacred fire, and go to the forest for wood for it. At twilight the pupils would all get together in the "singing room" and sing and dance. Some of the children slept in the sanctuary, where the women were not allowed to enter. At the age of fifteen or sixteen, the parents took their sons from the school to teach them some trade and hunting or fishing.

The curriculum of these elementary schools was simple. They learned to read easy hieroglyphs and make them with small colored feathers. Counting was done mainly with objects.

The method was that of trial and error based upon imitation. Their methods of discipline were cruel. Terror was the spring of education with the Aztecs. The punishments were such as tying the boy's feet and hands for half a day, or leaving him on the street for one day naked, and with feet and hands tied. The

head of a noisy boy was put into a large earthen jar full of smoke.[1]

In the schools for the nobles the curriculum was more elaborate. They were taught pictography, astronomy—science in which the Aztecs had a remarkable knowledge—the sacred hymns, and their laws also were taught to them. The nobles had literary education. Since they were destined to occupy public places and to be sent as ambassadors, they were trained to pronounce long speeches that were already made in an official style. There was no manual work to be performed by them and the disciplinary methods were less cruel, usually consisting in an increase of work upon the pupil and at the same time a decrease in allowance of food.

At the age of fifteen the noble took the training in the use of weapons, and at twenty he went to his first campaign under the watchful eye of a veteran soldier. At the age of twenty-two, if he was not married, he was consecrated to the service of the gods, entering into the sacerdotal class.

The moral education was embodied in precepts and practices in which there was a mixture of lofty and cruel features.[2] Here are some examples of the Aztecs' maxims: "Walk calmly, talk calmly, be modest in your dress and reserved in your manners." "Do not walk too fast or too slowly; the slow march has a pretentious air and the fast one, on the contrary, shows little calm and an uneasy spirit."—Sahagum. "Dieu a or ordonné que la femme fit usage de l'homme et réciproquement; mais il convient que cela pratique avec moderation . . . ne te jette pas sur la femme, comme le chien sur sa nourriture; n'imite pas cet animal dans sa manier d'avaler ce qu'on lui donne."—Letourneau.—To the girls: "Avoid familiarity with men." "Live and stay in your own home."—Prescott.[3]

Colonial Education

The Conquerors could not take any interest in education; first, because in their nature, too full of love for adventure, there was little or no place at all for instruction, and, second, because

[1] *See Letourneau*, Ch., L'Evolution de l'education. Chapter VII, "L'education dans l'Ancient Mexique." *Prescott*, Conquest of Mexico, Vol. I, "Education of Youth." p. 61. *Biart*, Lucien, The Aztecs. Chapter XI, "Education—Public Schools." p. 213.

[2] See Biart, The Aztecs. Chapter XVII, "Ideographic Paintings and Feather Mosaics." p. 313.

[3] The data for the Aztec education were taken mainly from Prescott, Conquest of Mexico. Vol. I. Letourneau, L'Evolution de L'Education. Sahagum, Historia de la Nueva Espafia.

of their ignorance, they never paid attention to such a matter. It is told that Pizarro, the Conqueror of Peru, being asked by Atahualpam, "what have I written upon my finger?" Pizarro, after seeing the finger, answered, "I do not know," to which the astonished Inca King exclaimed, "Ah, barbarous, it is the name of your god, written on my nail by one of your soldiers." Pizarro could not read.

But the cause of civilization was not lost. Right behind the ignorant Conquerors came another type of men, who are the only white spots in this picture of blood and destruction. "Men,"[4] said Parkman, "pale with the close breath of the cloister, here came to spend the noon and evening of their lives ruling savage tribes in a mild paternal way, and stood serene before the direst shapes of death. Men of courtly nurture, heirs to the polish of a far-reaching ancestry, here, with their dauntless hardihood, put to shame the boldest sons of toil." Such were the priests and monks who came to America to Christianize the Indians.

In 1516, Cardinal Cisneros commanded all the vessels bound to America to carry at least one monk or priest. In 1562 the king ordered the same thing. Soon an army of Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, and other religious orders were doing a noble work in New Spain. In 1563, the king of Spain gave instructions to all these orders: "To establish the Indians in villages, to provide a schoolhouse in each village that the children might be taught reading, writing, and Christian doctrine, to make efforts to have the Indians marry their wives in due religious form, and to encourage the inter-marriage of some Christians with the Indians, both men and women."[5]

In every village a church was built and beside it a school. "We took,"[6] writes Sahagum, "the children of the 'caciques' into our schools, where we taught them to read and write and chant. The children of the poor class or natives were brought together in our courtyard and were instructed in the Christian faith."

The scanty popular education in the Colonial period assumed a pronounced religious character. The aim of such education

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
[5] Fabie, Eusayo Historico, p. 52.
[6] Sahagum, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

was political, to maintain, through the school, the people of the Colony under the temporal power of Spain. There was no well defined plan of organization and instruction*o* each priest working isolated in the way that he thought the best.

The classical spirit of the Middle Ages animated the methods and curriculum of the Colonial schools. The instruction was dogmatic in its character. Obedience and routine were the rule of all actions and tradition their inspiration. There was no scientific freedom, as wide scientific studies would not help to keep the colonies submissive.

The curriculum of the elementary schools was typical Middle Ages—the three R's, singing, and religious teaching. However, there were some exceptions to this poor curriculum. "Pedro de Gante founded," says the Mexican historian, Icazbalceta, "and conducted in the Indian quarter in Mexico a great school attended by over a thousand Indian boys, which combined instruction in mechanical and the fine arts. In its workshops the boys were taught to be tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and painters."[7] "In the seminary under my charge," writes Pedro de Gante, "there are already six hundred pupils who know how to read, write, sing, and help in the divine office."

The method of recitation is given by another priest. "After the roll call a teacher recited twice the lesson for the day in a loud voice and the natives repeated it after him," says father Mendieta. The discipline was formal and rigid. "La letra con sangre entra," was the familiar maxim. Patience and punishment were the arms of the teacher. "The Indians," says Gante, "are docile and of good disposition and inclined to receive our faith, but *force* and *interest* determine them to it more than *sweetness* and *affection*."[8]

The Jesuits led higher education, following, of course, the usual path of traditional orthodoxy. Nevertheless, there were at Mexico City many signs of progress and love of science, and in general the New Spain was by far more advanced than the English Colonies. I have often read that Harvard is the oldest university in America, but a little investigation shows that the University of Mexico was already old when Harvard was erected. I have also read that the first book printed in America

[7] Icazbalceta, Obras I, p. 146.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

was the Massachusetts Bay "Psalm Book" in 1637. There were no less than seven printing presses at work in Mexico during the sixteenth century, fully fifty years before the said book was issued.[9]

"Not all the institutions of learning founded in Mexico,"[10] writes Bourne, "in the sixteenth century can be enumerated here, but it is not too much to say that, in number, range of studies, and standard of attainments by the officers, they surpassed anything existing in English America until the nineteenth century. Mexican scholars made distinguished achievements in some branches of science, particularly surgery, but pre-eminently linguistics, history, and anthropology. Dictionaries and grammars of the native languages are an imposing proof of their scholarly devotion and intellectual activity." Mr. Wash, formerly referred to, says, "American self-sufficiency from which we look down on the Latins, our thorough-going condescension of their ignorance and lack of worthiness, is all founded on our lack of real knowledge with regard to them." (p. 331.)

Mexico Independent

With the political changes, French literature and philosophy overflowed the intellectual world in Mexico. Its influence upon the privileged classes was strong. The Spanish power had died and French domination had begun. But this intellectual activity did not go down to the popular school.

The first conscious effort toward the organization of the elementary school in Mexico was made by an Englishman, well known to any student of history of education, Lancaster. He came to Mexico in 1822 and, with his characteristic activity, opened a school in the building in whose halls the Inquisition had lived. His experiment attracted the attention of some well educated Mexicans, and a little later, January, 1823, they formed a society—La Compañia Lancasteriana—that had for its aim the diffusion of education among the people. In Article 2 of its Statutes, it is stated that "The object of the Company is to give free primary education to the children and poor classes by means of schools established at *its* expense."[11]

[9] See Origins in American Education, by J. J. Wash, p. 320.
[10] Bourne, E., The American Nation—Spain in America, Vol. III.
[11] Reglamento de la Compañia Lancasteriana de Mexico, Chap. I.

Slowly and entirely under private initiative and effort the "Compañia Lancasteriana" was extending its fields of action. Already Mexico was in the hands of the revolution and "we cannot," says an educator of those days, "make war and schools at the same time." In 1843, the Government gave the charge of the schools of the Federal District to the Lancaster Company. But as the Government did not have money, it did not help the Company to perform its task in any way. However, in that year there was a reorganization of the Lancaster Company and under the presidency of Jose Maria Teruel a campaign to acquire funds by popular subscription was started. The Company had then 1310 schools under its charge.

Methods and Curriculum. In Chapter X of the Statutes referred to (1843) is written: "Art. 69—The methods of teaching in the schools of this Company shall be the system '*mutual* and *simultaneous*,' with the reforms that experience shall teach from time to time and the improvements in *economy* of *time* and *short instruction* that the popular primary instruction requires.

"Art. 70—In the schools for boys shall be taught *reading*, *writing*, and *elementary arithmetic*, the *Castillian grammar*, *morals*, and the *catechism*.

"Art. 71—In the schools for girls shall be taught reading, writing, and counting, the *catechism* of the Christian *doctrine*, the *maxims* of the *good education* and *serving*." (pages 16 and 17.)

The chapter ends with the statement that there shall be examinations for promotion of the pupils every month, and that a small sum of money shall be given as rewards to the more advanced pupils.

The shortcomings of the Lancaster School need not be discussed here. The reading of Statutes shows plainly that those schools had the seal of the old educational formalism and were under the strong influence of the Church. The impulse of their founders was a noble one and accomplished its aims, which were to awaken interest for popular education in the Government and in the upper classes and to *instruct* as many as its resources allowed. Indeed, the Lancastrian School never had any pedagogical pretentions. Its end was, in Mexico, as it was in England, to educate the greatest number with the least expenditure of money and time. Its monitorial system was recommended more for economical than for pedagogical reasons.

The influence of the Lancaster School in Mexico was profound, and even to-day there are many country schools in which the old monitorial system is practiced in a true Lancasterian fashion and for many a little community an ideal school building is a house with one lonely but spacious hall, which was characteristic of the Lancasterian Schools.

After the war with United States in 1847, a reaction took place among the educated class. In our war with France the Mexican patriotism was stirred and unified. The American Intervention left a deep mark on the hearts of thinking Mexicans. We were defeated, but not for lack of patriotism and courage. There were plenty of proofs that Mexicans knew how to die for their Country. "The constancy with which the Mexican infantry,"[12] says General Taylor, "sustained this severe cannonade was the theme of universal remark and admiration." "The private Mexican soldier,"[13] says Grant, "was poorly clothed, worse fed, and seldom paid. With all this I have seen as brave stands made by these men as I *have ever seen made by soldiers.*" Later he adds, "The Mexicans have shown a patriotism which it would be well if we would imitate in part, with more regard for truth." What was, then, the cause of our defeats? It was mainly ignorance, lack of organization in effort and will. The body of men that formed the invading forces was united, acted consciously, and with a spirit of co-operation and "teamwork" that was for us a revelation.

Yet, the Government was too busy with revolutions to pay any attention to the schools. Again private initiative manifested itself and in 1851, out of 122 elementary schools in Mexico City with 7636 pupils, only *four* schools with 488 pupils belonged to the Government; *two* with 150 pupils belonged to the convents, and 116 schools with 6955 children were of private initiative. What a noble example for the present generation to imitate! It is a fact worth while noting that Mexico is the only Latin-American nation in which the beginning of popular education was due mainly to private initiative.[14]

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[12] Taylor, Z., The Battles of the Rio Grande,

[13] Personal Memories of U. S. Grant, pp. 168, 169.

[14] In the majority of the Spanish American Republics, public education is and has been in the hands of the Church or of the Government. (See Historia de la Instruceion Primaria En la Republica Argentina, Chapter VII, "La accion nacional y la provincial en la Escuela," p. 111.

It was not until 1867 that an organized effort was made to build up a school system. It was under Juarez's administration—it is always he—that a law was enacted making popular education *compulsory*, *free*, and *secular*.

At last the school could get out of the *hands* of the Church. The State and the Church were separated and the school was made free. Honor to the men who accomplished such a task! Honor to the men who wrote the name of Mexico at the *head* of the *list* of *liberal Latin Countries*! However, this honor cost us *three years* of *cruel war*. My poor country has bought dearly every bit of her progress!

The Government took charge of the public education and men of great ability and wisdom, like Covarrubias, Ramirez, Tagle, and Barreda, undertook the work of making a body of laws, to regulate the new-born educational system.

The *ideals* of the new school changed a great deal. Before, the task of the popular schools was to make good Catholics; now its aspiration was to produce fine Mexicans, better men. The methods changed little, since there was the same lack of trained teachers and no normal schools to educate such teachers. In the curriculum, besides the three R's, we find new subjects, such as the metric system, physics and chemistry, geometry, geography, history, and civics, which show clearly the ideas that animated the new educational policy. But public education dragged along painfully. There was no money, and few professional educators.

Later on, under the iron hand of Diaz, "the epilepsy of anarchic ambitions" died away, and blessed peace came at last. The Government could afford more attention and money for the schools.

The need for schools to train teachers was felt more than before. It was good fortune that brought to Mexico, at "this psychological moment," two German educators with sound and modern pedagogical knowledge, with youth and love for their profession, and—what was perhaps most valuable of all—with a remarkable ability and tact for dealing with our people. They were Enrique Luabscher and Enrique Rebsamen. In February, 1883, they founded a private school, a Model School in Orizaba, a city of the State of Vera Cruz. Their work was readily appreciated, and very soon, from all parts of the country, teach-

ers were coming to see and to learn the new methods of teaching. The Model School was turned into a school for teachers. Luabscher translated from the German some of the most popular of Froebel's pedagogical literature. He also published an educational paper, *The School Teacher*. To understand the extent of the influence of Luabscher it is enough to know that he was General Superintendent of Schools in the northern State of Chichuahua, Principal of the Normal School in the State of Oaxaca, and was inaugurating his educational activities in the Federal District when he died. His colleague and friend, Enrique Rebsamen, undoubtedly has had a stronger influence than he. Rebsamen is the father of the modern Normal School in Mexico. He was called from the Model School at Orizaba to the capital of the State, and there, in the beautiful city of Jalapa, with the unconditional help of the progressive Governor of the State, he founded a Normal School that is now famous in the educational annals of Mexico. Rebsamen displayed, in that school, his fine qualities as an educator. For more than a decade the teachers that came from that school were sent, under urgent appeals from the respective governments of the States, throughout the whole republic, to organize the school systems, to found Normal Schools, etc.[15] The educational publication of the Normal School of Jalapa, *El Mexico Intellectual*, was the leading pedagogical paper of the country. Rebsamen himself was called by General Diaz to Mexico City. Conscious of the honor bestowed upon him, he consented to leave his school, which he loved so dearly and which no previous offer of any kind could make him leave.

Enrique Rebsamen contributed more than anyone else to form a body of educational theories, mostly of Herbarian origin, to direct our school practices, until that time merely empirics. The Normal School of Puebla, founded in 1881, and the Normal School of Mexico, founded in 1887, were in some measure also contributors, but none had the influence of the school of Jalapa. To-day there is a normal school in the capital of each State, and the German pedagogy is familiar to most of them. There were

[15] Some of the Normal Schools established by Rebsamen's pupils are the Normal School of Oaxaca, established by A. Castellanos; the Normal School of Guanajuato, established by Enrique Paniagua; the Normal School of Chihuahua, established by F. Reyes and Alconedo; the Normal School of Tabasco, established by H. Gil; and several others I cannot remember just now.

some Mexicans too among the pioneers of educational theory, such as Carrillo and Flores. In the National Congress of Education, held in 1889 and 1890 at Mexico City, in which every State of the Republic was represented, for the first time it was shown that the country had at last real educators. For the first time also, in Mexico, educational practice and legislation were discussed according to sound principles of psychology and philosophy of education. For the first time Mexico, as a nation, took up her problems of education and thought about and discussed them.

In the school laws enacted in 1900 there were evidences of the activities just referred to. According to these laws, "the[16] *Instruccion Primaria* shall be divided into *Elemental Education* (four years) and *Superior Education* (two years); *Supplementary Schools* shall be created, to give elemental instruction to those individuals who have not got it, during school age, and, to complete or extend the work of these schools, *Complementary Schools* shall be erected to give some technical knowledge to the workman."

The *aim* of the education shall be "First, *Physical Education*, to fortify the body and to procure its perfect development; second, *Intellectual Education*, to invigorate the intelligence and give to the pupils knowledge that is indispensable; third, *Moral Education*, which tends to perfect the individuals, making them noble and useful to the community. In this way shall be united in a person knowledge, kindness, and health."[17] In the *curriculum* besides the three R's other new subjects are found, such as civic instruction, drawing, nature-study, gymnastics, military exercises, and singing. In the Superior School (grammar), French and English, natural history, physiology, hygiene, and notions of political economy, manual work for boys and domestic labors for girls.

Method: "The teachings must be essentially practical. The lessons in the sciences shall be given by means of presenting phenomena themselves, by means of experiments, or the proper objects if possible. The class must be oral. Daily work shall be six hours and each class period of forty-five minutes. Thursdays shall be devoted to excursions to get specimens to make

[16] La Noticia del Ministerio de Educacion, Mexico, 1900; p. 2.
[17] *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

collections, to visit factories, mines, agricultural establishments, and historical places and monuments." "No corporal or degrading punishments shall be allowed." The whole educational system of the District and the Territories is in charge of the Minister of Education in the Federal District and is run under the technical direction of a General Director of Public Education and a staff of superintendents and medical inspectors. There is, too, a "Council of Vigilance," formed by citizens to enforce this compulsory attendance of pupils and to fine the parents who fail to comply with the said law.

Statistics: The number of schools at that time in the Federal District under the supervision of the Government was:

Official Schools in the Federal District and Territories	454 with	55,732 pupils
Private Schools	66 with	4,432 pupils
Catholic Church Schools	15 with	2,544 pupils
Schools of other denominations	14 with	833 pupils
Total	549 with	63,541 pupils[18]

The school budget in 1900 was $875,634.40.

All the data given here and the quotations were obtained from the "Brief Notice of the Public Education in Mexico" sent to the Paris Exposition in 1900 by the Minister of Education.

Present School Conditions

Since 1900, the school system and, in general, the cause of education have made great progress. In 1900 the Secretary of Public Education was also the Secretary of Justice. Later the Minister of Public Education was made a separate office, and at the head of this important post a man of great ability, wisdom, and love for the cause of the education was placed. Don Justo Sierra is the founder of the modern educational system of Mexico. He surrounded himself with men of high records in the educational field, such as Rebsamen, Chavez, Flores, and placed each one in his special line of work. Sierra reorganized the National University and brought to Mexico professors from Europe, as Dr. H. Keller, of Berlin, and the United States. Among those called from this country were Professor F. Boas, of Columbia University, Dr. L. Rowe, of Philadelphia, and the

[18] Total school population of the Federal District and Territories was estimated (1900's Census) as 149,270!

psychologist, Dr. W. M. Baldwin. The Minister, J. Sierra, raised the salaries of all schoolteachers according to their scholarship and established pensions of retirement for them.[20] He sent young men to study education in Europe and the United States. At the end of the school year of 1910–11, the school budget for the Federal District and Territories was raised from little less than one million in 1900 to $4,010,426! There were 72 school inspectors, 534 Elemental Schools, 5 Kindergartens, 46 Superior (Grammar Schools), and 44 Supplementary Schools (Night Schools) for workmen who have not completed their elementary education. There were also "Complementary Schools to give some technical and useful knowledge to the laborers, clerks, and tradesmen"—a kind of Continuation School. A School of Commerce for men and another for women were erected and three Primary Industrial Schools began to function. The Primary Education Department published a magazine of education, the Normal School Department had another magazine to discuss subjects relating to its line of activities, and the Minister edited a Bulletin of Education.

The pedagogical insight that animated this educational "renaissance" in Mexico is best shown by the spirit of its legislation. In the first Article of the Law of Primary Education, given the 15th of August, 1908, it is stated that "The Official Primary Schools shall be essentially educative; the instruction in them shall be considered only as a means to education."[21]

"Art. Second—The Primary Education shall be National, that is, it shall aim to develop in all the children a love for the Mother Country and its institutions; its purpose shall be to contribute to her progress and the betterment of her inhabitants. It shall be integral, that is, shall tend to produce simultaneously in the pupils the moral, physical, intellectual, and esthetic development. It shall be laic, that is, shall be neutral regarding all religious beliefs and abstain itself, therefore, from teaching, defending, or attacking any of them. The primary education shall be, besides, free."

Regarding the curriculum, few changes were made in the list of subjects that constituted it. The changes were mainly in the

[20] See Anuarios Escolares, Art. 21, p. 15.

[21] *Art. 1a* Las Escuelas oficiales primarias séran esencialmente educativas; la instruccion, en ellas se considerara solo como un *medio* de Educacion," p. 5.

new point of view and method with which some subjects should be presented. In geography, for instance, it is recommended that the productions of the country shall be predominant in the mind of the teachers, rather than the names and location of hundreds of *dry names*. The history must be developed biographically in the first school grades, etc., etc. In Article 9 it is stated that, "There shall be established in the schools, or where it is more convenient, (a) Playgrounds, (b) Bath houses, (c) Workshops for manual and industrial work, (d) Fields of cultivation for agricultural studies, and (e) Household arts laboratories where the girls may study domestic economy in its relations to home hygiene, cooking, and washing."[22]

The elementary education was extended to another year, making it five years instead of four, the school age being from six to fourteen years. "The failure of the parents to send their children to school shall be punished with a fine not exceeding $500 or imprisonment not exceeding a month." The local authorities have the duty of enforcing this law and inflicting these penalties. "The said authorities shall make it easy for the pupils to go to school, giving them assistance in form of transportation and even helping the children with food and clothes when such measure is indispensable for the regular attendance at school."

In Article 16 it is stated that "The executive shall establish *special schools* and *special teachers* for children of deficient *physical, intellectual,* or *moral development.*"

Such are, in brief outline, the school laws that were enacted by the Diaz Administration, under the inspiration of the Minister of Public Education, Justo Sierra, on August 15, 1908—almost on the eve of the Revolution. All the given extracts of laws and data regarding the number of schools, etc., were taken from the "School Annal of the Secretary of Public Instruction —Primary Education, 1910–1911, Mexico."[23]

I was disappointed not to find in the School Annals, or anywhere else, statistics referring to the school enrollment and attendance during the years of 1910 and 1911. I asked for in-

[22] With exception of the establishment of bath houses and fields for cultivation and agricultural studies; all other reforms were carried out, mostly in our "Superior Schools" (Grammar).

[23] Anuarios Escolares de la Secretaria de Instruccion Publica y Bellas Artes—Education Primaria, Mexico, 1900–11.

formation from Mexico, and received some copies of the official paper *El Diario Oficial*, in which some statistics of the kind that I wanted were to be found. Such statistics were, however, of more recent date (1912–13) and, although scanty, they are a revelation, because they show that, in spite of the turmoil and war that is raging over the country, still the work of education is going on and some faithful still keep the sacred fire burning in the temple of Athena.

School Enrollment in the Federal District and Territories for the Academic Year 1912–1913

	Pupils
Elementary and Superior Schools	100,027
Kindergarten Schools	1,653
Private Schools	8,062
Trades and Commercial Schools	3,078
Complementary and Special Schools for workmen (mostly night schools)	11,891
Supplementary Schools (night schools)	9,130
Total enrollment	133,831[24]

The school budget for 1912–1913 was $5,630,383.09.

During the last decade the Government began to realize the importance of education. This is clearly shown by a simple comparison:

In 1900, the school enrollment was..... 63,541 pupils
In 1912, in the midst of the Revolution, it was..... 133,831 pupils
In 1900, when everything was prosperous, the school budget was $875,634.40
In 1912, when all was ruin and destruction, the school budget was..... $5,630,383.09

So far, I have treated only the educational activities in the Federal District and the Territories under the direct control of the Federal Government. But the Mexican Republic is composed of twenty-seven independent states, in which the educational policy is a local affair. Most of them copy or try to imitate the Central Government, thus giving certain uniformity to the educational system in the Republic. Nevertheless, those states are too handicapped by the lack of money and expert direc-

[24] There are no data available regarding the total school population in 1912–13.

tion to accomplish much. Therefore, the illiteracy in the whole Mexican Republic is appalling. In the last decade progress has been made in the school crusade, but, unhappily, there are no statistics by which to judge clearly such progress. In order to give an eloquent idea of the immensity of the problem of education in Mexico, I am going to close this informational part of my work with a statistical table—the dry and significant eloquence of the numbers—showing the illiteracy in Mexico, taken from the Census of 1900.

TABLE I

	Persons 12 Years of Age or Over Who Can Neither Read or Write			Persons Less than 12 Years Who Can Neither Read nor Write		
Sections	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Central States	1,457,276	1,771,591	3,228,867	874,743	837,445	1,712,188
Northern States	245,021	250,555	495,573	186,938	176,849	363,787
Gulf States	398,532	465,619	864,151	306,718	284,638	591,356
Pacific Coast States	1,019,115	1,176,915	2,196,030	750,444	711,367	1,461,811
Total	3,119,944	3,664,680	6,784,621	2,010,293	2,010,299	4,129,142

	Persons Concerning Whom Information Could Not be Obtained			Persons Who Can Read and Write		
Sections	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Central States	57,861	67,598	125,002	601,147	401,545	1,002,692
Northern States	1,554	2,011	3,578	158,379	129,398	287,777
Gulf States	556	506	1,062	164,873	115,214	280,080
Pacific Coast States	16,457	19,449	35,906	348,926	260,106	609,032
Total	76,438	89,564	165,645	1,273,325	906,263	2,179,581

RESUME

Sections	Inhabitants	Persons Who Can Read and Write
Central States	6,239,038	1,002,692
Northern States	1,174,341	207,777
Gulf States	1,756,006	280,087
Pacific Coast States	4,437,874	609,032
Total	13,607,259	2,179,588

In order to give an idea of the progress that has been made in the educational campaign for the last decade, I have presented some statistical data from the Federal District. To accomplish the same with the rest of the Republic, I am giving the Statistics of Elementary Schools for the period of 1874–1907, which were gathered by the Minister of Public Education in Mexico City. This is the only available material that was found for this purpose:

Table II—Statistics of Elementary Schools, 1874–1907

Section	Total Population		Estimated School Population		Number of Public Primary Schools		Number of Private Primary Schools		Total Number of Public and Private Primary Schools	
	1874	1900	1874	1900	1874	1900	1874	1907	1874	1907
Central States	4,539,940	6,239,038	907,986	1,247,904	3,336	4,800	1,160	1,116	4,496	5,916
Northern States	567,325	1,174,341	113,463	334,867	376	924	185	226	561	1,150
Gulf States	1,231,388	1,756,006	246,277	351,195	702	1,469	100	194	802	1,663
Pacific Coast States	3,004,217	4,437,879	600,963	891,995	1,575	2,517	694	694	2,269	3,211
Total	9,342,870	13,607,229	1,868,689	2,725,963	5,989	9,710	2,139	2,230	8,128	11,940

Sections	Enrollment						Expenditures	
	Public Primary Schools		Private Primary Schools		Public and Private Primary Schools		For Public Primary Schools	
	1874	1907	1874	1907	1874	1907	1874	1907
Central States	91,148	305,836	16,806	70,269	203,111	376,105	465,368	2,305,839
Northern States	18,832	74,763	3,626	14,118	22,458	88,881	70,456	598,391
Gulf States	27,758	87,502	3,212	13,615	33,670	101,117	42,648	561,914
Pacific Coast States	36,057	161,380	6,105	49,139	84,654	210,519	167,039	796,744
Total	173,795	629,481	28,849	147,141	343,893	776,622	745,511	4,262,888

Needs of the Mexican Schools

Regarding the educational policy in general: The statistics given elsewhere in this work, in connection with the illiteracy in Mexico, are a vivid proof that the most pressing need of the nation is the speedy education of its ignorant masses. Mexico is anxious for schools, many schools, under competent technical direction. Some states are able to take care of themselves, such as Puebla, Vera Cruz, Jalisco; they are commercial or industrial states and are financially able to carry out a vigorous educational policy. But the great majority of the states of the Republic are unable to do so. The majority of their inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, working as simple laborers, and usually poorly paid. The school funds are collected by personal taxation; each individual gives a few cents. The lands do not pay school taxes. Most of these states are thinly populated; so the school fund is very small. On the other hand, the Federal Government is usually strong financially, has better schools to train teachers, and at the head of the department of Public Education in the Federal District are educators of experience and culture. Therefore, the nationalization of the system of primary education, organized, supervised, and partly controlled by the Federal Government should be the first step of the national educational policy in Mexico.

For the Indian schools the absolute control by the Federal Government is necessary; but, for a great system of national primary education, *only part* of the authority and control should be under the Central Government. The parents should have the right to see how their children are educated and, since the people of the town must also help in the sustenance of the school, they have the right to see how their money is spent. So the local authorities and the people of the community should feel and actually have responsibilities and rights regarding their local school policy. The Federal Government should help financially and encourage professionally, but should not take care of the school entirely. The people must have an interest in their school and it is natural to take more interest in that which is costing us.

The Federal Government shall be in a position to exercise and make felt its influence, mostly through technical supervision

and professional advice, keeping in mind that thoughtful suggestions are often more effective than sharp commands. For the teachers and pupils, the Central Federal Office will be a source of inspiration, by bringing to them the best pedagogical literature and school materials. One of the dangers of a centralized system of education is that it tends to kill the personality and initiative of the teacher and pupils, when too many orders are given, when everything must be done according to prescribed regulations. The Federal superintendent has many chances to foster the initiative of his teachers; for instance, by giving them the minimum of provisions instead of the maximum, thus leaving an open field to exercise their personality. If the teachers know that they have voice and vote in their schools and are not merely parts of a machinery, their work will improve and their co-operation will be sincere.

The territory of the Republic is so extensive and the interests and activities in the different states so different that the courses of study necessarily should be different. Each state might have its own textbooks and adequate materials, according to the local needs and conditions.

But there is one thing in which uniformity is a requisite which should be kept in the foreground in planning a great national system of education. Every pupil must come out of his school, no matter where it is located, a *real Mexican*. Every pupil should have the *consciousness* of the national territory and fondly keep the same national ideals of historic solidarity, the same love for the national literature. There should be *uniformity* in *ideals* of *patriotism* and *devotion* to the *Mother Country*, so that the child from the Pacific Coast can feel the same thrill before the Mexican flag as the child from the Gulf Coast.

The direction of such a great school system is a difficult task, but a level-headed, thoroughly trained, and professional educator at the wheel is enough to insure the success in the work of the whole educational system. One of the defects of the schools in Mexico is that the amateurs in education, or dilettantes in pedagogy, have often been the heads of the schools and of the high educational offices.

In the United States, where the States are so jealous of their local independence, there is a growing feeling among the leading educators that the educational centralization, at least of

some type of educational institutions such as vocational schools, is becoming necessary.

The school policy and educational officers must keep out of politics. The directing heads and superintendents in the Department of Education should owe their positions to their professional training and personal character and ability and not to political favors. These employees should be protected by adequate laws, so as to feel easy and free in their tasks and be able to put all their energies and minds upon them. Incompetency and negligence should be the reasons for their removal. No one puts his whole soul into his work if he knows that perhaps tomorrow he and his efforts will be carried away in the oblivion of a political change. In a huge national centralized school system, lack of stability in educational policy of the Federal Government is a calamity. The technical direction of educational affairs, therefore, should not be changed with ins and outs in politics.

The School

Some ideas have been given already of the modern conception of education and the function of the school; however, it is well to add a few statements regarding the schools in Mexico. In the eagerness to have modern schools, there is in Mexico a kind of mania of imitation, trying to do what is being done in the schools of Europe or the United States, thus overlooking the needs of Mexico's own national education. Our first duty is to make our course of study national, our didactic material Mexican; in one word, to make our schools *ours*. There is, no doubt, a good and noble idea in this "mania" to do what is being done in the best schools, but, as Dr. Dewey says, "A working model is not something to be copied; it is to afford a demonstration of the *feasibility* of the *principle* and of the *methods* which *make* it *feasible*." Indeed, the Mexican teachers must study, observe, and profit from the experiences of other educators. It is one of the blessings of civilization, to be able to share the successful experiences of the advanced nations. But they must *assimilate* those experiences and make them their own "flesh" as the Englishman does the sweetmeat of the sheep of the Argentine pampas. If they know the ideals of a modern school, the absurdity of some of their school activities will be evident.

The school life and work should reflect the activities of the community. The schools act "as agencies to bring home to the child some of the primal necessities of the community," says Dr. Dewey, or, he adds, "as instrumentalities through which the school itself shall be made a genuine form of active community life instead of a place set apart in which to learn lessons."

The greatest need of the Mexican schools is to bring them close to the people of the community, not only from the point of view of their occupations, but from the social side too. The relations between the school and the home have been practically nil. The press and the public must be interested in the school through its social activities. The ideals that the child gets at the school are unknown to the family and ignored by all, outside of the school walls. The Mexican school has been an "island of knowledge," mainly engaged "in training the mind, in disciplining the faculties, in *making perception* and *reason keener*." The doctrine of formal discipline in its full meaning, never has had a better home!

The excellent criticism that Dr. George Kerschensteiner, Superintendent of Schools in Munich, makes of the school can be very well applied to our own Mexican schools.[25] "During the period of elementary school age, as in his previous childhood years, the pupil is by no means disposed merely to listen and passively to take in the knowledge of others. The tendencies of the human being at this period are toward work, occupation, doing, testing, experimenting, personal experience, in order to learn incessantly through the medium of actuality. The children are all initiative. They discover new fields for the indulgence of their desire for occupation and forget all the world in its exercise. Ninety per cent of them, in spite of every effort of book education, prefer by far any practical occupation to silent abstract thought and reflection. Only when other peoples' knowledge contributes to success in their efforts do they prick up their ears to listen; then they devour books! In the workshop and in the kitchen, in the garden and in the field, in the stable and in the fishing boat, they are ever ready to work. These hundreds of accomplishments are developed and apprehended by the unconscious muscular sense; there they *feel*,

[25] This quotation was taken from a translation made in the Report of Commissioner of Education, 1909. Vol. I.

above all, the *pulsations* of *social life* in *their* own *activities*. There they become conscious of the relations which the community life establishes between persons, and of the dependence of the smaller upon the greater, as well as of the greater upon the smaller . . . . !

"And now the school opens its doors. Gone is every occupation that had engaged the whole child; gone are the activities of home, of workshop, of kitchen, of stable, of garden, of field. Gone are all digging, building, making, every activity—gone the whole world of the child. A new world, world with a hundred riddles and incomprehensible demands and purposes, stands before him. Instead of sand pile, the building blocks, the hammer, the whip—slate, pencil, primer, ruler, instead of merry chatting and romancing—silence and listening, instead of merry bustle in road and street—sitting still and holding fast, instead of common enterprise under freely chosen leaders—solidarity, prescribed tasks, instead of helping the weak neighbor—deliberate isolation that he may not copy. Is it surprising if the little ones at first stand aghast and feel lost, if they become reticent instead of open minded, if their thoughts roam far away beyond the four walls of the schoolroom in spite of the best intentions, in spite of admonitions and punishments?"

I close the subject of the school, leaving in the mind the above quotation, that speaks volumes of sane pedagogy and is so rich in valuable suggestions regarding the activities of the school.

The Teacher

The teaching profession needs love and affection as well as professional knowledge. To feel affection for the children and to be able to follow or lead them sympathetically in their wanderings for "sweetness and light," is one of the conditions of a good teacher. There is another indispensable requisite that *in our days* the successful teacher must have—*knowledge*, professional and general. To teach well, the teacher must know well. This is a point that should be treated in connection with the Mexican teachers. There is no need to emphasize here the obvious importance of a teacher clean in body and mind and heart, whose manners, character, and whole personality should be an attractive example for the pupils to imitate, in whose serene and

fatherly eyes the children can see themselves with respectful delight, and think, longingly, "If I could only be like him!" When this reaction has been accomplished, half of the battle has been won; and I am tempted to say that the whole battle has been won! The spiritual union of the pupil and the teacher is completed.

But to return to the problem of knowledge in relation to the Mexican teachers. The majority of my colleagues in Mexico must agree with this charge that I am going to make against the Mexican teachers. That is, that the ninety per cent of them *lack* the ambition for *better training*. The great majority of the teachers, as soon as they leave the normal school, if they have been in any, never touch again a book of psychology or pedagogy or even a magazine of education. The scanty knowledge that they got in their student days remains the only baggage for their professional work throughout life. It is unnecessary for me to tell the result of such attitude in our educational work.

Even the teachers who have had normal school training, what do they know when they leave the normal school? Little of everything and nothing well. They have these advantages over the "empirical" teachers. They possess that "pedantry which shields ignorance from exposure," and are "experts in the art of seeming wise with empty minds."

The fault is mostly, of course, in the schools; although there are and have been in the faculties men of great erudition and knowledge, the majority of them are not educators and very few know anything about the science of education and understand its practice. A great many of the "professors" are the debris of other professions or have failed in their business and have taken refuge in a school. Their ability and scholarship are evidenced in the form of a "letter of introduction" from some political influence, that it is often wise to acknowledge. So a fine morning they find themselves teaching a subject which they hardly know! Of course, they hastily read a few books on the subject, try to look wise, and hide their ignorance with empty phraseology, of which the Latin peoples are so fond. Finally, acting upon the belief that every man has instinctively a little of the teacher in him, such "professors" end by thinking themselves real teachers.

In education, the theory should always be the scientific side of the practice; the scientific theory should be mostly the practice condensed and crystallized. How can some of those professors, who never have seen a schoolroom since their childhood, be anything but failures in preparing efficient school teachers?

Mexico has some excellent modern normal schools, with an up-to-date equipment. Dr. L. Rowe says in his report on education in Mexico that "the Normal School of Mexico City is thoroughly equipped and modern in every respect."[26] There is something more; there are plenty of scholarships for the young students who care to study in the normal schools. But the teachings in these schools are almost "metaphysical," in which there "are definitions of human faculties, old theories of mind inherited from the pedagogic fathers." As G. Stanley Hall says, "The departments of human knowledge are classified, correlated, co-ordinated, and educational value is discussed in an abstract way, with an aloofness for detailed externality that is an anachronism in a concrete age, while the cult of Herbart and Froebel flourishes as a finality instead of a prologue to a great drama now well on its first act.[27]

The remedies for these evils are: first of all, the establishment of a higher normal school or teachers' college to train professors. In such a school, of course, there must be departments of all branches of education to form specialists, such as a department of educational psychology, another of history and philosophy of education, another of school administration, etc. Each department must be under the head of an able staff of assistants. Second, to modify our normal school curriculum and make it more professional, so the teachers will know by theory and personal observation something about play, habit, imitation, environmental influences, heredity, evolution, juvenile abnormalities, etc., and perhaps less about Froebel's symbolic pedagogical philosophy or Pestalozzi's educational lyricisms. Indeed, it is more useful for the teachers to know what the Mexican Indians beyond the hills do and need than to spend much time to become familiar with what a Spartan boy did two thousand years ago. Third, the educational authorities should promote summer schools and teachers' institutes, educational

[26] Educational Report, 1911, p. 488.
[27] Adolescence, Vol. II, p. 496.

lectures by specialists, national educational conventions; encourage pedagogical literature; reward scholarship systematically; and establish examinations for promotions. The principals of the schools and superintendents should keep their teachers alive professionally by grade meetings of teachers of adjacent grades, subject meetings, round table meetings, classes for definite instruction, exhibitions of work, visiting days, etc.

It would be a surprise to many Mexican teachers to know that in my graduate courses in this University I have, just now, several classmates over fifty years of age, and many around the forties, and this year is not an exception, nor is this college in this respect.

Curriculum

There are two sides to be considered regarding the arrangement of the courses of study, the social and the psychological. From the social point of view, the needs and standards of the community should give the key for the selection of materials, which shall be in accordance with the current social conditions. Utility in its broadest, ethical, aesthetic and material senses shall be the ultimate end. From the psychological point of view, the range of activities must be considered; the individual whose growth is going to be stimulated should be taken into account. From the social side, the interest is centered in the body of knowledge to be acquired, to put the pupils in close relation with the social, economic, and ethical conditions of their community, and here in its broad outlines the course of study should be mandatory. From the psychological side, the work in the school shall be taken "as method of life" and according to the varying capacities of the children. Here the course of study *shall be suggestive* as to details, methods, and materials. Of course, both sides melt into each other. In nature nothing stands alone; everything in life is correlated: so, if we want the school to be an epitome of life, the courses of study, as well as the activities springing from them, should be related.

Applying the above discussion to the conditions in Mexico, I should say that the broad policy in selecting the subject matter must have as its aim to increase the *earning capacity* of the *ignorant* Mexican masses, as a necessary condition to raise them in their ideals of life. In the present epoch, nobody has culture

who does not know how to work. In the rural community, where the only chance of learning something is to be had in the short school life, the pupil should get there some "vocational hints," which will enable him to develop later by himself an increasing efficiency to earn his living. These vocational suggestions must tend to improve the agriculture labor and methods in the rural schools and emphasize the industrial side in the urban schools. Regarding the method, considering the training of the majority of the Mexican teachers, the conclusion as to their methods can easily be drawn. Yes, the Mexican teachers in Mexico have also the *mania* to ask the children to *reason everything;* they have, too, the *obsession* for formal steps, and "analysis" of processes that the child should never analyze. They have the "madness" of over-explanations! "The soul," says Stanley Hall, protesting against this over-care regarding methods, so-called rational or logical, "naturally storms its way to the center of things with a rapid impetuosity, but the *methodaster* and *macerator blunts* the intuitions, *the best thing in youth* drags down thoughts that fly and makes them 'crawl at a slow, senescent pace.'"

Furthermore, the Mexican schools have *almost* entirely abolished text-books—with the exception of those in language. The classes are oral, that is, we have, too, "the passion for oral instruction that carried to excess forces the children to listen to so many vain words constantly forgotten and distorted and often not worth remembering!" "Is not reading," asks Dr. Steege, "the surest means of acquiring the indispensable elements of history, science, reading, and grammar? Because the book was formerly abused by making it a mere instrument of mechanical reading, it should not be to-day discarded as useless. Books speak a language more precise, reliable, profound, and more moving than the majority of teachers. They contain the treasure of knowledge and experience acquired by the human race. It is not pretended that this intellectual and moral treasure can be imparted to every pupil, but it is possible to give everyone the key to it, to make it familiar to him, and to excite his interest in it. Then, when he leaves school, although he may forget much that he has learned there, he will have a taste for study and will possess the essential means of learning." (Educational Report, 1909, p. 414.)

CHAPTER IV

NATIONAL CHARACTER

The individuals of a well-constituted society have a soul, a character, that distinguish them from the individuals of other societies. The combined influences of language, customs, and traditions make a Frenchman different from an Englishman or a German. A homogeneity in race and culture gives to the French people, already forming a political body, a national character.

Has Mexico a national character?

"Wherever a community," says Bryce, "has both political independence and a distinctive character recognizable in its members, we call it a nation. Applying such a test to the Spanish American republics, some of them, such as Mexico, Argentine, and Chile, are undeniably nations."[1]

Certainly the Mexicans as individuals possess certain typical characteristics. But, as a nation, Mexico has not yet a strong national character, because it has not a crystallized culture of its own; because, as every young nation in full period of transition and fusion, some of the features of its national type are in an embryonic stage.

Throughout this paper I have described some of the elements —racial, social, and cultural—which are influencing the naissant character of the new nation.

Let us single out, for the study of the Mexican character, that type of Mexicans whose psychological traits are less diffuse; those who belong to the not very large group in whom homogeneity in race and culture is more or less an accomplished fact, those whose similarity in ideals makes of them, also, a moral social unity. I am referring to that type that, outside of Mexico, would be called in general Latin-American.

[1] Bryce, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

The Mexicans have, with more or less definiteness, as have all Latin-Americans, the features of the Spanish character. Their psychology is practically the same.

The Mexicans have striking characteristics. They possess a keen sense-perception and their conceptions are rapid. Their power of intuition is remarkable. Their reasoning is quick; they seize the idea and react mentally upon it quickly, or do not react at all. "One marked national characteristic of the Latin-American," says Crichfield, "is his marvelous development of the sense-perception and extraordinary keenness of mind; his mind is as sharp as a razor and as keen as the point of a sword."[2]

Perhaps due to this "mental impulsiveness," they often lack method in their reasoning and want in thoroughness. To keep their minds busy they must have, like children, new subjects always before them. Persistence in one task, intellectual or manual, which becomes mechanical and monotonous, exasperates them. It is this craving to do something new and to change that makes an American with experience in Spanish America say that "if an uncultured Latin-American be placed with a machine one of the two things must happen, either the Latin-American will ruin the machine or the machine will kill the Latin-American."

Their capacities, hard pressed by a powerful imagination, are unable to sustain effort in one single direction at a time. The imagination puts wings to their ideas and they soon fly, leaving the world of realities behind. It was a Latin that called the imagination "la loca de la casa." Being imaginative, the Mexican is frequently an idealist and a dreamer; this is the only thing in which he is persistent in his idealism. His artistic temperament makes him respond keenly to any aesthetic manifestation. He loves form and elegant diction in literary expressions. That is why French literature is so at home in Mexico.

"French literature," says Bryce, "has a double attraction for Latin-Americans. It gratifies their fondness for graceful and pointed and rhetorical expression. Spaniards, like Frenchmen, love style and French style has for them a peculiar charm. They have an intellectual affinity for France, for the brightness

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[2] Crichfield, American Supremacy, Vol. I, Chap. XXV.

of her ideas, the gaiety of her spirit, the finish of her literary methods, and the quality of her sentiments."[3]

The reaction of these mental qualities upon the ordinary life is too well known. They have been the source of our backwardness commercially and industrially. We are an anachronism in this intensely industrial epoch. The "bohemian" contempt of the Mexicans and, in general, of the Latin peoples, for common and ordinary work, and a decided disposition to avoid the prosaic commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," is proverbial.

"The Mexicans are 'impractical,'" say the Americans, "and unable to undertake solid enterprises," and they, full of charity, *take care* of our mines and railroads. "The Mexicans are men of chivalry and poetry and not men of affairs," say the Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, etc., and they, with a lovely spirit of helpfulness, *take charge* of practically all our commercial and industrial enterprises. And we, with our manners of *grand seigneur* and *hidalga* countenance, showing that there are some drops of Don Quixote's blood in our veins, pass along, in an imaginary aloofness, looking down with an olympic contempt on these modern Phoenicians, who placidly smile at our empty pockets and sometimes empty stomachs!

But, after all, which are the happier? Mr. Bryce, trying to be mild on our weak points, says, "They are not fond of commercial business. The process of money making has not for them that fatal attraction which enslaves so many capable men in the United States."

The *emotional* responsiveness of the Mexicans is striking, but their moods change suddenly. Their enthusiasms are "fire in straw," their passionate impulses are like "soap bubbles." They are very excitable and prone to act rashly under the impulses of the moment. The defects springing out of these characteristics are obvious. Feelings apart from intelligence lead to sentimentalism, to blind action.

To sum up, I am going to quote the lucid opinion of Dr. Speer.[4] "Speaking generally," he says, "the Latin-Americans are warm-hearted, courteous, friendly, kind, patriotic to the

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[3] Bryce, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

[4] R. E. Speer, South America, p. 73.

very soul, but the *tone*, the *vigor*, the moral bottom, the hard veracity, the *indomitable purpose*, the energy, the *directness* of the Teutonic people are lacking in them."

Yes, and we do not only lack directness and stubborness in the work, but we are lacking in the sense of personal responsibility and ambition to improve our work. We forget that we live in a world in which only the people of energy and *indomitable purpose* are the victors. The old Spanish slogan, "labor is for plebeians," has gone for ever, and in this commercial and industrial epoch culture in its broad sense includes activity, ability to work, to produce, and to create.

As long as we shirk from the hardships of commercial, industrial, or agricultural work and instead look for "soft snap," and are willing to fossilize ourselves in the semi-repose of a public office, or go into the literary professions—thus "spoiling a successful shoemaker in the making of a poor lawyer, or to waste ten years to make ourselves useless"—our country will drag along painfully.

Who is going to work to change this Latin attitude toward labor and life in general? *The family?* It is doubtful. The old Spanish prejudice against trades and commercialism as an occupation has been inherited and is deeply rooted in our parents. They are the first who wish rather to see their sons starving as lawyers than prosperous as storekeepers. They fondly do their best to keep their sons from toil and hardship in their preparation for life. Their lives are easy and their road smooth. How can a young man raised under those conditions face the battle of life courageously and successfully? Thus the Latin-American boy or young man is ever dependent and is always looking toward his parents or the government for help and using his father as a crutch to walk through life.

How much we have to learn from the Teutonic peoples in this respect! They push their sons into the scrap for life, as the duck pushes its offspring into the water. Franklin wrote to his wife, regarding his son, "He must be disabused and shown that at the rate I am spending my money there will be nothing left for him."

If the Latin-American fathers could only be persuaded to take the same attitude!

Can the Church Help Us in This Respect?

There is no doubt that religious ideas can influence men deeply. "They are the only forces that can influence character *in a rapid manner*," says LeBon, but what has the Church in Mexico done? In her stubbornness to stick to some old dogmas and traditions, in her absolute refusal to meet modern conditions and ideas half way, she has left the uneducated believers in the most hopeless fanaticism and the educated classes in the darkest of agnosticisms. We have allowed our old gods to die and our faith is tottering! And the great culprit has been our Church. We are not irreligious, "gods are not immortals, but religious spirit is eternal." But the Catholic Church has refused to come up with us into the modern world and civilization and we have been left alone. We are now too grown up to believe in "fairy tales," and this is the method by which our Church has endeavored hopelessly to keep in our hearts the most beautiful and dearest thing in a soul, *faith*.

Mexico needs a religious readjustment. We need a renaissance in our faith and beliefs. "History shows us," says LeBon, "that people do not long survive the disappearance of their gods. The civilization that is born with them also dies with them. *There is nothing so destructive as the dust of dead gods.*"[5] But if our old "gods" are dead our *God* is alive. The spirit of Christianity is too deep in our hearts and too dear to our souls to fade away. How are we going to reorganize our beliefs? Protestantism perhaps? Oh, no! The missionaries that go to Mexico might keep this in mind. Mexico as a nation will be Protestant only when the New Englanders have bull-fights every Sunday!

But I am getting away from my topic. I wanted only to remark that our Church cannot help us to modify our present morals.

So here, as in many other social problems in Mexico, the *School* is the only potent factor of reform. I am well aware of the fact that the school, everywhere, is only a part and at the best not a large part, as a means of moral education. But in Mexico the school must lead, direct, and inspire not only its pupils, but the other powerful moral agencies, such as the

[5] LeBon, *op. cit.*, p. 191, for all his quotations on religion.

family and the community and Church. It must show the parents the folly of their conduct toward their sons, it must educate them too.

And as to the *children*, what a splendid opportunity for a *school* and for a *teacher*.

The school as a store to get knowledge is an anachronism in our days. The school as molder of characters is the modern ideal school.

How is the modern school trying to mold the character? Not through preaching against evil, neither through soporific lessons on ethics, but by *saturating* with morality every bit of work that the pupil performs. By giving a worthy outlet to the native impulses and instincts of the pupil through practical channels, in the broad social sense, thus making conduct that springs from those instincts and impulses able to react justly and skillfully in the daily life and situations. If the pupils gain in the school power to stand on their own feet and have stamina enough to face the battle for life courageously, such a school has done its duty and such pupil will have initiative, persistence, and industry, which are all blossoms of a true moral sense.

What a good chance for the school to arouse in our little Latin-Americans a sympathetic disposition toward work, by appealing through a wise course of study to their interest in connection with problems of their community life. If the right kind of materials and motives are given, the children will always work and work hard. They are not yet possessed by the contempt for work that their parents have; their natural impulses toward activity are greater than any social prejudices; and when these pupils leave their school they have already the habit of toil and the right attitude toward work. From that school will come out less holders of diplomas and more producers of wealth, and national regeneration and *emancipation* will be then a happy reality.

What a good chance for a *teacher* to appeal through his *methods* to the instinctive "making" capacities of his pupils to arouse in them the much needed systematic and orderly energy in their tasks. The right method not only gives good results but shows that persistence and order in action are sources of success. It gives a "mental clue" to how to reach an end. How

the inconsistent and changeable Mexicans need to acquire such attitude of mind, such habits of thought and action. We need *thoroughness* in overcoming our racial inability to go to the bottom of the mastering of any task; *actuation*, so that the work will not be left for *Mañana*; *independence* and *freedom* of action during the labor, so as to arouse in the always dependent little Latin that sense of *personal responsibility* and *initiative* which they lack.

The interest in the work, the motives of action, must be of a broad social service. This side of education will never be too much emphasized in a Latin country, where the most selfish individualism reigns supreme.

Above all, the teacher must remember that ideas do not influence conduct until they have been transformed into sentiments. In children, emotions are intensively active and, if everywhere life is ruled by emotions more than reason, in a Latin country and in our children this is even more true.

So give the little ones an ideal, cultivate in their tender hearts an ambition, a dynamic desire to accomplish something, to be someone, to help someone. Do not crush their little souls with brutal materialism, making them breathe and move in an atmosphere of *narrow utilitarism.* Leave in their hearts some illusions to dream about. Sometimes there is such joy to dream and fancy! How unhappy must the people be who do not, who can not dream!

But awake in those little people, too, that manly attitude toward life which makes man successful. Take away from them that Latin-intellectual sentimentalism that makes of every youth a "romantic do-nothing," or a doll of the drawing rooms. Yes, indeed, *pour iron into their souls!*

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

My task is at its end. I have not brought a new theory into the field of Education; I have not offered a new contribution to the world of ideas. The august altar of this science has remained with its old consecrated gifts. To increase its precious burden is only a genius's privilege; already there are many, a legion of common and ordinary "producers" of "new" ideas and "novel theories." Perhaps they are more daring than I, or it may be, in their fondness for their works, they forget what a really *new idea* is; they ignore what a *new theory* really means.

Where is, then, the originality that a work of this kind is supposed to have? I do claim the originality of bringing to the attention of my *Alma Mater* an undiscovered field for a noble educational crusade. I am only sorry that my intellect did not follow the expectations of my heart. I should like to have called the attention of the whole educational world to Mexico's educational needs and problems. No, I have not brought a new method to investigate or with which to impart knowledge; but I have brought to you, instead, an ignored people to be educated, a forgotten race to be uplifted.

There has been for a long time a general desire in the cultured circles of the United States to help China in her fight against obscurity. American teachers have gone over and American schools have been built. Indeed, the Modern China owes much of her occidental culture to the United States. But the Mexicans receive of their powerful and cultured neighbor mainly bullets to make their fratricide war more effective. No, Mexicans have not even heard of your wonderful institutions of learning, of your magnificent palaces to science; but they know your monstrous battleships that are now infesting their ports.

It is one of my fond illusions to hope that some day my countrymen will know "the other Americans," those whom I know, those who are building schools, those who are working patriotic-

ally to make their country a better country, those who are fighting unselfishly to make humanity a better lot.

If the interest of those Americans is aroused by the facts presented in this work and our situation is to them a revelation which could stimulate them to do us good, then I consider that my effort has not been lost. I have done my duty as a Mexican. Meanwhile, our door is open and you *know now* what we badly need.

As to the Mexicans, one word:

I am not afraid of a Yankee conquest, I do not believe in a Japanese invasion, I do not think a European colonization possible. I *am afraid* of the *Mexican peril!* I believe that the greatest danger for our national existence is right in our own country. If some day our nation is bound to disappear from the world of the living, I dread that the Brutus will be a Mexican. God knows that it breaks my heart even to think of it. But who, having observed closely some of the unhappy developments of the last three years, can help having those thoughts?

But it is time yet to *find* ourselves! We must not lose our hope. Suffering is a great molder of character and teacher of experience. Our racial inheritance is no better and no worse than the inheritances of the other races. It is up to us to cultivate and put in relief its great qualities and to correct and banish its faults. We must throw away our prejudices and indolences and live and participate in a world in which activity in industry and commerce is the striking characteristic. "Implacable civilization," says Kidd, "has passed sentence on all the races that are unable to adapt themselves to our form of social evolution and from that verdict there is no appeal."

Our indifference to public affairs concerning our country is a dangerous sign. Personal effort, personal interest, willingness to do something to take our country out of her present chaos is our greatest need. I make Demoulin's apostrophe to the Frenchman mine. "Social salvation," he says, "is an essentially personal affair. . . Every one *must shift for himself!*"

The Mexicans who think (there are some) that we are an anemic race bound to degenerate, are ignorant and weak or half-suicides. There is plenty of stamina and pluck in our race; there is enough energy and hardihood in our people. We only

need to educate them to teach them how to use all these qualities. "The Mexicans," says Bryce, "are children of the most dogged of the native races as well as the most stalwart of the Spanish settlers."

What has the future in store for us? Only God knows. We must have faith in him. Success comes to *those* who *believe!*

VITA

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